

Ancient Biographies

L. MUNATIUS PLANCUS

SERVING AND SURVIVING IN THE ROMAN REVOLUTION

SECOND EDITION

Thomas H. Watkins



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L. Munatius Plancus

This volume examines the life and career of L. Munatius Plancus, and through him, explores the tumultuous final years of the Roman Republic. Plancus had a very active and lengthy political career, from his initial appearance on the staff of Julius Caesar in Gaul in 54 BC at least through the censorship of 22 BC. During this time, he was in close contact for over 30 years with all the major figures during a period of tremendous political and social upheaval in Rome. He maneuvered carefully and cautiously, changing affiliation from boyhood ties to Cicero, to Caesar, to Antony and Cleopatra, and finally to Octavian – it was Plancus himself who proposed the motion whereby the Senate conferred the name “Augustus” on the new ruler of Rome. More than just a biography of this fascinating figure, this volume also offers insight into the politics of this complex period.

Thomas H. Watkins is Emeritus Professor at Western Illinois University, USA, and after his retirement taught Roman history at Virginia Tech for 10 years.

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L. Munatius Plancus

Serving and Surviving in the Roman Revolution

Second edition

Thomas H. Watkins

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Contents

List of illustrations

Acknowledgments

- 1 The evidence: discontinuity, biases, and hypotheses
- 2 Family and homeland: the Munatii Planci of southern Latium
- 3 Plancus the Caesarian, 54–44: from legate to consul designate
- 4 Plancus without Caesar: proconsul of Gaul, March–December 44
- 5 Plancus the reluctant warrior: January–July 43
- 6 Plancus the Antonian: late 43–mid 32
- 7 Plancus in transition and Horace, *Ode* 1.7
- 8 Plancus the Augustan: mid-32–22

Epilogue: Perilous prominence: the Tivoli villa, the Temple of Saturn, and the mausoleum through the centuries

Appendix I L. Licinius Crassus and the Munatii Planci

Appendix II T. Munatius Plancus Bursa

Bibliography

Index of People

Index of Topics

Illustrations

- 1.1 The mausoleum of L. Munatius Plancus on Monte Orlando at Gaeta
- 1.2 West-central Italy
- 1.3 Statue found at Tivoli and sometimes identified as Plancus
- 1.4 Herm found at Lyon and sometimes identified as Plancus
- 2.1 Caieta and its environs
- 2.2 Tibur and its environs
- 2.3 Conjectural stemma of the Munatii Planci. Few of these relationships are certain; the fixed points of reference are the birth by 84 of L. Munatius Plancus (cos. 42) and the statement on his epitaph that he is the fourth consecutive generation with the praenomen Lucius.
- 5.1 Movement of the western armies, April–July 43

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Thanks also go to a number of people at Western Illinois University where I was employed until retirement at the end of 2002. The reference staff and the interlibrary loan office acquired every item I sought. Scott Miner of the Geography Department's cartography laboratory compiled the maps that appear as [Figures 1.2](#), [2.1](#), [2.2](#), and [5.1](#). The computer expertise of Sean O'Donnell-Brown and particularly Sharon Schisler was of immense value in the final stages of preparation.

In 2003 I relocated to Blacksburg, Virginia, and for ten years taught part-time in the History Department at Virginia Tech. Over the years I have accumulated new friends and colleagues who encouraged me to continue to be professionally active. Adjunct faculty status gave me enhanced access to the university library and its interlibrary loan services, so thanks to successive department chairs and colleagues, Glenn Bugh, Dan Thorp, and Mark Barrow, and associate chair Trudy Becker. Renewed work on Plancus led me to revise

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This revised edition, like the original, is dedicated to my wife Sharon who over the years has endured countless discussions about Plancus and, recently, provided immeasurable care in helping me through a prolonged health crisis.

Department of History
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Blacksburg, Virginia, June 2018

1 The evidence

Discontinuity, biases, and hypotheses

For more than two millennia the reputation of L. Munatius Plancus has suffered from a steady drumbeat of denunciation, condemnation of the person arising from disapproval of what appear to be self-serving actions, and a lack of stability. The trend began early: in a letter of 44 BC. Cicero urged Plancus to prove wrong those who were saying that he “*nimis servire temporibus*,” “engaged in excessive time-serving.” Cicero did not say who these detractors were and tactfully proceeded to state that, because he had been a family friend for years and had been the young Plancus’ tutor, he knew the slurs were false. This letter has been influential in shaping Plancus’ reputation as the archetypal politician without principles, whose only goal was to further his own career. Plancus’ response more or less admits the existence of the charges, though not their truth.¹ Indeed, Cicero spoke favorably of Plancus when it suited his purposes, though what he thought about him in private was perhaps quite different. He never expressed his personal judgment in any surviving text. Influenced by these unsubstantiated allegations and the tone set by admirers of Cicero, historians have found their prejudices confirmed in Plancus’ performance over the subsequent remainder of a career which extended until at least 22. Since Cicero bluntly told Plancus that he was developing the reputation of being a shifty time-server, it must be true, and writers have simply found confirmation of this assessment whenever they encountered Plancus’ participation and influence.

The constant hostility toward Plancus originated in writers who approved of Cicero and disliked Caesar and Antony, notably Seneca the Elder and Velleius Paterculus, who wrote about a generation after Plancus’ time, and was picked up by later writers and so became the standard verdict.² It was bad enough that Plancus not only served the dictator who ended the traditional Roman *res*

publica. He then apparently betrayed Cicero in the crisis of 44–43 and was in part responsible for his death. Still worse, he joined the disreputable Antony in mid-summer of 43, served him prominently until 32, and then, when it looked as though that master was about to lose, jumped to join Octavian. Plancus lacked integrity and was always ready deviously to abandon right in the pursuit of advantage. His chief talents were the ability to flatter and to judge the winds and currents of the political storms.

These interpretations ignore the complexities of the constantly shifting politics of the time. Few, if any political, figures in the highest ranks were constant in their affiliations and loyalties. Active participation, even survival, required flexibility, which is not identical with a total lack of principles. Right and wrong were not as clear-cut as some who later took the moral high road and enjoyed the safety of historical hindsight liked to think. Cicero himself was devious, borderline illegal, and treacherous in his dealings with Caesar and Octavian and in his appeals to Brutus and Cassius, but his voluminous writings and speeches adopted high-minded but unrealistic policies bearing much responsibility for the resumption of civil war in 44–43. However, his letters and orations have shaped the interpretation of events.

In a nutshell, the fundamental problem historians now face is the shortage of evidence outside the Ciceronian tradition. We do not have the writings and speeches of the other figures of the day, aside from the scattered letters preserved in the Ciceronian corpus. Leading Romans wrote constantly, as correspondence was a part of the daily routine; couriers, merchants, and private travelers carried packets of letters all through the Roman world. Plancus illustrates the situation. We have a few of his letters in book 10 of the *ad Familiares*, but all were written in the crisis of 44–43 and are either to Cicero or dispatches to the Senate. Surely, he wrote to other influential politicians and military men (some to Antony and Octavian are referred to), and equally surely he wrote other letters to Cicero over the years, but these letters have not survived. He is repeatedly said to have been a well-known orator, but there is no trace of his speeches. For instance, we greatly regret not having the text of the speech he delivered in the Senate in 27 when he proposed “Augustus.” This partial evidence makes historical analysis and assessment tricky and unreliable.

The universally negative assessment of Plancus cannot be the whole truth, and the ensuing chapters examine his career. Hypotheses are necessary and frequent, doubtless some better grounded and more convincing than others. Deductions from the evidence rather than specific statements are at the heart of several fixed convictions. Most important is the belief that the three men under whom Plancus served for the majority of his long career recognized his talents and abilities and were not deterred by any slurs. Julius Caesar did not

pick incompetent subordinates, even when rendering political favors to those whom he sought to make allies, and clearly saw much in Plancus. He promoted him steadily and tabbed him for a consulship with Dec. Junius Brutus in sequence to his trusted associates A. Hirtius and C. Pansa – at a time when Caesar was to be off fighting the Parthians. To be left as joint head of state when Caesar was to have been more than a thousand miles distant surely implies he had the dictator's full confidence.

Much the same can be said of Plancus' service under Antony. Antony kept Plancus in positions of trust and power for a decade, and modern scholars admit the soundness of Antony's administration of the eastern domains of Rome (altogether a different matter from his involvement with Cleopatra). No source details Plancus' administrative achievements, but Antony's decision to entrust him with his signet ring while he was to be away on campaign in 35 is confirmation of his assessment. Plancus' role under Antony combined the roles of Agrippa and Maecenas under Octavian in the 30s. Octavian is the third of Plancus' masters. Octavian welcomed him in 32 and employed him for probably another ten years. No more than his adoptive father did the young Caesar employ men whose primary talent was flattery. Choosing him to propose senatorial adoption of "Augustus" in 27 was certainly a mark of appreciation of Plancus' talents, and it is equally proof that he did not think Plancus would in any way disgrace the new regime. The same holds for Augustus' decision to make Plancus a censor in 22.

Plancus thus served the three dominant Romans of the period from 54 to 22. None of the three has left a written evaluation, and this makes it difficult to form a balanced assessment. On the other hand, Plancus' long employment under very different superiors in a turbulent age makes him worth studying. For years he was in the inner circle of power, clearly influential but never supreme. We can label him a man of the second rank, but nobody else is a close parallel, and this leaves him in a class by himself. None of Caesar's officers from the 50s and 40s enjoyed careers of similar length and success. In a limited sense, evaluations of Plancus are similar to those traditionally made of M. Lepidus; he, too, held high office under Caesar and obviously enjoyed his confidence. Because Lepidus later fell from power in a humiliating fashion, he has been dismissed as a nonentity or worse. Weigel's biography, *Lepidus the Tarnished Triumvir* is a welcome corrective. Along the same line, in *Magnus Pius* Welch has demonstrated that Sextus Pompey was of greater significance than has been traditionally recognized: he was a major player until his downfall in 36–35, not a mere pirate or brigand. Neither, however, is a good parallel to Plancus, who never had or sought triumviral powers or to control portions of the Roman Empire.

There is no denying Plancus' success, if durability in high office is the

marker. His known career ran for over thirty years, from legate under Caesar in 54 to censor under Augustus in 22, and perhaps a few more years. Carter has remarked that Plancus “was one of the most distinguished, astute, and unprincipled survivors of the civil wars.”³ Similarly, Osgood summarizes him as “if anything, a survivor” who enjoyed “a remarkable career” and has been “almost universally condemned.”⁴ Those who kept their heads and remained prominent throughout this chaotic age were necessarily capable and flexible. They incited jealousy and hatred in those who dropped out of, or were eliminated from, the competition – and their heirs and admirers.

We can accept, then, that Plancus in one sense is a type: the survivor, able to shift positions repeatedly and emerge on the winning side each time. But he was not just a survivor, and adaptability need not mean a total lack of principles or treacherous conduct, as it fails to consider influence. Alcibiades is similar in the twists and turns of his career. The agile Greek would have found a more historical parallel in Plancus than the quasi-mythological Coriolanus whom Plutarch used to illustrate the art of changing sides in times of political turmoil. Unlike Alcibiades, however, Plancus was almost always in a subordinate position to a superior – first Caesar, then Antony, and finally Octavian/Augustus. He was, in short, a reliable “number two” man. The only exception was in 44–43 when he was governor of Gallia Comata and one of several commanders of substantial armies. Like the others, he maneuvered carefully and cautiously in the evolving struggle between Antony and Octavian. Even when one of the consuls in 42 and so occupying the leading magistracy in the state, he was beneath the triumvirs.

In Tudor England, an equally tumultuous age, we find an analog in Sir Richard Rich (1496–1567). Cooperating with Henry VIII in the break from Rome, he committed perjury to assist his sovereign in gaining a “confession” from the steadfast Catholic Sir Thomas More in 1535, joined in the torture of the Protestant Anne Askew, and acquired lands from dissolved monasteries. Participants in the Pilgrimage of Grace of 1536 linked his name with Archbishop Cranmer and Secretary Cromwell – against whom Rich testified in 1540. Under the young king Edward VI, Rich adhered to the rising Calvinist brand of Protestantism promoted by the Duke of Northumberland. When the reactionary Mary Tudor acceded in 1553 Rich rejoined the old church and founded a boys’ school in Felsted (his home town) to train the young in the true faith. A few years later he adhered to Elizabethan Anglicanism. In 1559 he voted for the Act of Supremacy to protect his property but against the Act of Uniformity since the Mass saved his soul. Only a flexible conscience could go halfway on the *via media* of the Church of England.⁵

Two and a half centuries later, Talleyrand (1754–1838) personifies political adaptability. Born into an illustrious family of the *Ancien Regime* and

compelled by his parents to enter the church (as a cripple, the military was barred to him), he became bishop of Autun, but advocated the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1790. He survived the Terror, in part by visiting the United States, and served as foreign minister under the Directory. Coming to scorn the five directors, Talleyrand worked with Napoleon to replace them with the three consuls and then in 1804 helped make First Consul Napoleon emperor. Napoleon kept Talleyrand as foreign minister and elevated him to grand chamberlain, then in 1806 prince and Duke of Benevento. (Interestingly, Plancus distributed land at Benevento in 41 and boasted of it on his epitaph.) The next year Talleyrand's disapproval of Napoleon's infinite expansionism led him to leave the government. He reappeared at the Restoration in 1814, now in the service of Louis XVIII, and represented France at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. He continued to be active in foreign affairs up into the July monarchy of Louis Philippe in the 1830s.⁶

Talleyrand, Rich, and Plancus illustrate the art of political pliability, of long careers in tumultuous times, of service under various masters. In magnitude the changes in England 1534–1563 and France 1789–1830 are comparable to those in Rome between 54 and 22 BC.

The discontinuous evidence on Plancus does not permit a full biography. The fullest survey is E. Jullien, *Histoire de L. Munatius Plancus*, a sympathetic account of the founder of Lugdunum (Lyon), which is now well over a century old and severely outdated.⁷ More recent studies have improved our understanding of this critical period, and it is now possible to argue that Plancus was more able, better “connected,” and perhaps more prominent and less selfish than has been generally recognized.

The shortages in our evidence do not, however, leave us stranded and without hope. Bits and pieces allow the assembly of a reasonable and, it is to be hoped, convincing assessment of Plancus' career and significance. The remainder of this opening chapter surveys these fragmentary sources, and the ensuing chapters assemble them into a coherent whole. To begin with, we have only a tiny bit of evidence as to his father Lucius (the name is attested on Plancus' epitaph) and none at all as to the identity of his mother or wife. This is greatly to be regretted from a prosopographical point of view; the names of mother and wife or wives and more distant kin would help us align the Munatii Planci socially and politically. He had one, maybe two, brothers. M. Titius, the consul of 31, is labelled his nephew, son of Plancus' sister. No other relatives are on record. Since Cicero tutored the young Plancus, it seems safe to infer that the great orator and Plancus' father were at least acquainted. He is generally said to be from Tibur (Tivoli), but my reassessment shifts his family homeland to the area around Caieta (Gaeta) and gives him a villa near Tibur. As he was consul in 42 and Caesar adhered to the terms of the *Lex Annalis*, we

can posit a birth date at about 84. His last certain appearance is as censor in 22.

Few people have lived on such close terms to persons of the first rank as did Plancus. He knew Cicero from boyhood and Caesar for at least the final decade of the latter's life; they were fifteen to twenty years older than he. Lepidus, Decimus and Marcus Brutus, Cassius, Asinius Pollio, and Antony were close contemporaries. Vergil, Horace, and Octavian were fifteen to twenty years younger, but he knew both poets, too. Memoirs of his service justifying his caution and shifts in loyalty throughout his career, highlighting his prominence and rebutting his detractors, would make fascinating and informative reading, but there is no sign that Plancus ever wrote them.⁸ Some points would have required delicate handling and careful writing, for instance, his role in late 44–43, after 32, and in proposing "Augustus" in 27.

The earliest evidence for his career is a few passing references in the Caesarian corpus.⁹ Far more helpful is the correspondence with Cicero in the tenth book of *ad Familiares* and dating from September 44 to the following July: an exchange of letters with Cicero and copies of dispatches from Plancus in Gaul to the Senate. Cicero also sent two letters to Plancus' legate C. Furnius. In none of these letters are there any casual remarks, no best wishes or inquiries about personal matters such as family, friends, or health: all are pure business and deal with the evolving political-military crisis. These letters are only a small portion of Cicero's enormous correspondence from these hectic years, and they have to be read in their broader context. The few letters from Plancus, more than we have from the hand of Antony, Lepidus, or Pollio, give a peek into his cautious political and military maneuvering, but as already noted we must be lacking other letters to and from Cicero and his correspondence with others. There is also one other letter from Cicero in 46 included in the letters of recommendation.¹⁰ These letters all date to a very tightly defined period in Plancus' career, 46 and eight months in 44–43. No other primary evidence exists save the epitaph.

Plancus is not mentioned in any of Cicero's letters to other people, though a brother and either another brother or cousin do appear. He appears five times in the *Philippic* orations but in no other speeches. The value of the Ciceronian corpus is limited, as most writers felt it necessary to be less than fully candid. One never knew whether one's messenger or courier might break a seal and reveal a letter's content to parties other than the addressee. The impetuous Cicero, however, flattered Plancus and strove mightily to get him to lead his army in Cicero's grand crusade to crush Antony and save the state. Plancus had a different view of the situation, formed his own opinions, and acted as he thought best. He was polite but noncommittal: in other words, time-serving if one takes a negative view. More careful men than Cicero realized that this was not a time for rash action. While Plancus certainly wanted to preserve his

career (especially the designated consulship for 42), he also wished to avoid a renewal of civil war with the uncertainties of the battlefield. Many were convinced that caution was preferable to boldness.

Also to be regarded as primary source material is his *elogium*, the funerary inscription over the door of the imposing hilltop mausoleum overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea from a height of 167 meters at Caieta (Gaeta) on Monte Orlando some 130 kilometers south of Rome and two-thirds of the way to Naples. See [Figures 1.1](#) and [1.2](#).

L MVNATIVS L F L N L PRON/
PLANCVS COS CENS IMP ITER VII VIR/
EPVLON TRIVMP EX RAETIS AEDDEM SATVRNI/
FECIT DE MANIBIIS AGROS DIVISIT IN ITALIA/
BENEVENTI IN GALLIA COLONIAS DEDVXIT/
LVGVDUNUM ET RAVRICAM/

Lucius Munatius Plancus (son, grandson, and great-grandson of Lucius)
[was] consul,

censor, twice victorious general, a member of the priestly college the
Septemviri

Epulonum. He triumphed over the Raeti [in modern Switzerland and] built
the

Temple of Saturn [in the Forum at Rome] from the spoils of war. He
divided lands in Italy at Beneventum. In Gaul he founded the colonies of
Lugdunum and

Raurica [Lyon and Augst, near Basel].¹¹



Figure 1.1 The mausoleum of L. Munatius Plancus on Monte Orlando at Gaeta

© Galina Mikhailishina/Alamy Stock Photo

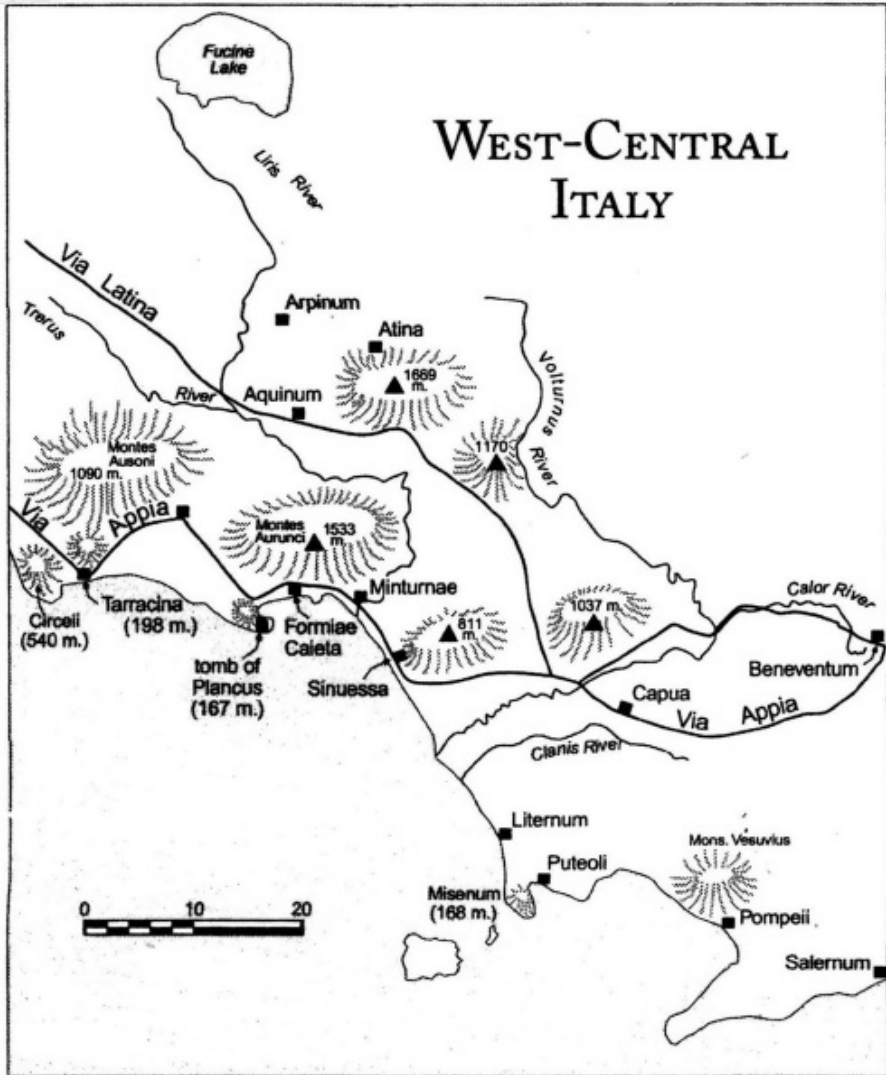


Figure 1.2 West-central Italy

This epitaph, his *res gestae*, or deeds, is similar to many others at first glance, such as those of the Scipios. Like most *elogia*, it is factual and truthful as far as it goes, but it does not give the entire truth. In many ways, the omissions are as interesting as the contents, and they will be analyzed in the following chapters. He probably chose the words himself, and thus tells readers how he wished to be remembered through the ages. There is nothing about any offices held before the consulship. The text passes over without comment his career under both Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Nor does it mention that he proposed the name “Augustus” for Octavian in the Senate in January 27.¹² It was wise not to highlight his years of high rank and service to Antony; and

with regard to his role in 27, one can assume that he thought it best not to encroach in any way upon the status and glory of the *princeps*. The very shape of his mausoleum, mirroring that of Augustus in Rome, was sufficient. With four chambers opening off the interior ring corridor, the mausoleum was obviously intended for subsequent generations of his family, and it is possible he might have transferred ashes of ancestors there as well, but no other inscriptions from the tomb are known.

The mausoleum was constructed in the late 20s, only a few years after that of Augustus and is one-third its diameter: 29.5 meters (100 Roman feet) vs. 87 meters. It is closely contemporary and similar in dimensions to two other well-preserved mausolea: those of Caecilia Metella on the Via Appia and of the Plautii Silvani at Ponte Lucano on the Via Tiburtina. The former has the same diameter as Plancus' – 29.5 meters but stands slightly taller at 11 meters vs. 8.8; the latter is about 17.3 meters in diameter and some 6 meters to the cornice. These drum-shaped mausolea had conical earthen tumuli above the masonry rising another 8 or 9 meters and were topped by a statue or trophy. The mounds are long gone, replaced by Medieval crenellations. Plancus' epitaph mentions the censorship of 22,¹³ permitting the inference that construction was in the preceding few years. Caecilia was the wife of a son of the triumvir Crassus, so her tomb can be dated to the early years of Augustus. The sepulcher of the Plautii is probably a bit newer, as the oldest tomb is that of the consul of 2 BC, M. Silvanus.

Typical of Roman *elogia* and different from modern tombstones, there is no reference to the deceased's date of birth or death and no allusion to mother, wife, or children. Paternal lineage indicates descent; and oddly in this formal context, the tribe (voting district) is omitted, but the great-grandfather's *nomen* is provided. That is to say, Plancus was the fourth consecutive Lucius Munatius Plancus, each the eldest son of his father. The importance of this rather peculiar designation is considered in the next chapter. Later sources, notably Tacitus, provide information on his grandchildren, a consul of AD 13 and the notorious Munatia Plancina who died in 33 after years of friendship with Livia and rivalry with the elder Agrippina. Whether the brother and sister were buried at Caieta is unknown.

The mausoleum dominates a long stretch of the coast. The spectacular location is another witness of Plancus' judgment. Monte Orlando is less than one-third the height of Monte Circeo to the north, but the port of Caieta made it a landmark for sailors. At the very top was either a trophy complementing the military ornamentation of the frieze or a statue of Plancus, likely gilt and gleaming in the sun and visible for miles out to sea. Gaeta is one of the few deep-water ports along the west coast of Italy. Fearing an Allied landing as the battle lines moved north from Salerno, the Germans fortified it in World War

II, placing an anti-aircraft battery adjacent to the mausoleum. Allied bombing or shelling inflicted damage, but it has been repaired and the area is now a park and nature preserve.

Possibly the enhanced prominence of Caieta in the 20s suggested to Vergil, then writing the *Aeneid*, the idea of inserting a reference to the place in the epic at the start of book 7. Alternatively, it has been suggested¹⁴ that Plancus deftly engineered a bit of propaganda on his own behalf. Having already associated himself with Caesar Octavian since 32 and significantly by proposing “Augustus” in 27, he now took advantage of Vergil’s recent commemoration of Caieta in the *Aeneid* to strengthen his standing with Augustus by constructing a mausoleum for himself on the very site where Caieta had been entombed many centuries ago. If this is correct, the tomb is Plancus’ ultimate act of ingratiation and time-serving. His monument has withstood the stresses of the centuries better than has Augustus’ in Rome.

Having left the faint-hearted on Sicily, Aeneas set sail for Italy but lost his helmsman Palinurus on the crossing. Cape Palinurus is named in his honor. Another old companion, Misenus, died not long after landing in Italy, and his ashes were buried in a tumulus near Cumae. Following the visit to the Underworld, Aeneas journeyed up the coast toward Latium.¹⁵ *En route* he put to shore to conduct the funeral of his old *nutrix* (nurse, governess) Caieta.¹⁶ She is an obscure figure, not in the earlier narrative, and the poet says nothing of her services, so readers are left uninformed as to the ties between her and Aeneas. All we have is the melancholy apostrophe:

Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix,
Aeternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti:
Et nunc servat honos sedem tuus, ossaque nomen
Hesperia in magna, si qua est ea gloria, signat.

In death you confer eternal fame (*famam*) on our shores; your reputation (*honos*) preserves the site and its name in turn marks your remains in great Hesperia – if indeed that can be called glory (*gloria*).¹⁷

Might this passage, easily overlooked between the solemn book 6 and the landing on the Latin shore in book 7, refer to Plancus? Certainly, his tomb increased the fame of the place; *moriens*, he too *aeternam famam dedit*. His *honos* was his political career, the *cursus honorum* outlined on his epitaph, perhaps just then being mounted over the mausoleum’s door. The lines in the epic perform several functions. Primarily Vergil intended to illustrate Aeneas’ *pietas* toward his former nanny and to underline the hero’s growing isolation as members of his Trojan family and band die off – his wife Creusa before they

left the homeland, his father Anchises on Sicily, Palinurus and Misenum barely in Italy, and now Caieta.¹⁸ Vergil was also commenting on the shallowness of earthly glory and providing an explanation of how the place acquired its name, as he had earlier done with capes Palinurus and Misenum. Further, 7.1–4 link the two halves of the *Aeneid*.¹⁹

To return to the sources, Horace, who probably knew Plancus, dedicated an ode to him and mentioned him at last once more, perhaps twice, and these poems receive a fresh interpretation later.²⁰ Velleius Paterculus, born about the time Plancus' career came to an end, provided the most hateful verdicts. He accused Plancus of proscribing his brother, a charge which other writers pick up but which I reject, and characterized him as “*morbo proditor*” (“diseased or congenital traitor”) and “*humillimus adsentator*” (“scrounging flatterer”). A well-known passage describes Plancus, costumed as the merman Glaucus, slithering on the floor at one of the banquets of Antony and Cleopatra, presumably to the delight of hosts and assembled guests.²¹ This colorful episode has been damaging to Plancus' reputation over the centuries, and few writers have been unable to resist referring to it. But in reality, it was harmless relaxation typical of Roman nobles in off-duty hours, less than dignified to be sure, but certainly less harmful than Octavian's masquerading as Apollo and possibly ravishing Livia when she was still another's wife at a similar banquet about the same time. The Plancus-as-Glaucus incident seems to have been a solitary occasion, and there is nothing to indicate that Plancus lived a dissolute life. In *Ode* 1.7 Horace advised him to set aside his cares and worries, to have a drink and relax, and there is no sign that Plancus ever exceeded this recommendation.

Velleius' hatred is largely unfounded,²² but the reasons for it have never been fully explained. In part, it reflects the propaganda of the 30s and early 20s, the world before and after the battle of Actium, in which the Augustan victors blackened the reputation of the Antonian losers. Second, Velleius' pro-Tiberian attitudes mirror the AD 20s, the complex and highly politicized events after the death of Germanicus. Tiberius struggled to deal with his mother Livia and Germanicus' widow Agrippina the Elder. Livia was a patron of Plancus' granddaughter Munatia Plancina, who Agrippina was convinced was partly responsible for her husband's sudden and mysterious death. Thanks to the intervention of Livia, Plancina escaped trial altogether, as her case was dismissed and never heard.²³ Discussion of the scandals and confusion comes in the Epilogue and is touched on here because it helps us understand the prevailing negative assessment of Plancus.

Cicero's personal longtime knowledge of Plancus ought to cancel Velleius' slanders to some extent, but as already noted, Cicero was striving to persuade Plancus to heed his advice, not serving as an impartial observer; and, of course,

Cicero's testimonies come to an end in 43 when Plancus' career had many years ahead of it. Indeed, Cicero could have provided a wealth of personal information about Plancus – physical appearance, family members – but did not, at least in the surviving correspondence. It is a pity that we do not have Cicero's candid assessment of Plancus in a letter to some third party similar to that which M. Brutus wrote to Atticus with regard to Cicero. Also in a hostile manner, Seneca noted Plancus' reputation as the greatest flatterer before Vitellius (three times consul under Claudius and father of the emperor of AD 69).²⁴

There are a few anecdotal references to Plancus. Pliny has four in his *Natural History*, two of them of some significance to this study. Toward the end of his Preface, he reports a squabble between Plancus and Asinius Pollio. Pollio was another Caesarian officer but after his consulship dropped out of politics and spent the next thirty-five years studying, writing, and engaging in literary criticism. He seems to have been bitter and resentful, sharply hostile toward all those with whom he disagreed, in politics as well as literature. Pollio and Plancus quarreled over some unknown matter, and Pollio prepared speeches to be used against him, to be delivered only after Plancus' death. Refusing to be drawn into this controversy, Plancus responded pithily, "*cum mortuis non nisi larvas luctari*" ("only ghosts fight with the dead"). The loss of Pollio's history of the period 60–30 is to be regretted, as it must have included many references to Plancus in his narrative, with critical anecdotes sprinkled along the way. Indeed, Pollio is said to have persuaded him to follow his lead and join Antony in the summer of 43. Plutarch and Appian use Pollio, and they probably picked up hostility toward Plancus.²⁵ Similarly, his correspondence has vanished except for a few letters to Cicero. It would be most valuable to know what he wrote to Antony in 43.

Pliny's other noteworthy reference to Plancus is that he was the referee at the banquet when Cleopatra demonstrated her ability to exceed Antony in wastefulness by arranging a meal which consumed an enormous sum of money.²⁶ She topped Antony by supposedly dissolving a pearl earring of staggering value in a cup of vinegar and then before she could dispose of its mate the same way was stopped by Plancus. The sources do not date or locate this fabulous repast. Plutarch mentions that the queen hosted sumptuous banquets for Antony at Tarsus in 41, but he does not mention either the pearl earring or Plancus. Since Plancus was still in Italy all through 41 and into 40, the feast cannot have been held at Tarsus. Pliny the Elder tells the story in the midst of his discussion of pearls, mentions Plancus, but does not locate it. As will emerge from further discussion in [Chapter 6](#), the importance of this anecdote is not so much that it illustrates the lavish lifestyle of Cleopatra and Antony as that it corroborates other evidence as to Plancus' high standing at

the court of Alexandria in 35–33. Pliny's two other allusions to Plancus are of little value: that three suns appeared during his consulship, and that when *imperator* he placed a painting of Victoria on the Capitol.²⁷ Both presumably belong in 42. Plancus was *imperator* a second time, but as this occurred about 35 when he was with Antony, it is not likely to have been the occasion for setting up a painting on the Capitol.

The windings of Plancus' career have attracted much attention, for he worked with a series of persons who were political enemies of one another, and at each stage he came out ahead. He witnessed the transition from the traditional *res publica* to the Principate. My task is to attempt to determine the extent to which he was more than a witness. It is argued here that he was far more than a bystander and peripheral participant, but a figure of considerable, though hidden, influence. The labels "smooth" and "the great careerist"²⁸ are as close to a favorable assessment as any modern historian has come. It is doubtful that Plancus was any less principled than most political figures of his time, but he was spectacularly successful in his flexibility, and this success provoked jealous enmity and hostile comments. He was never accused of *ferocia*, ruthlessness, in politics. Most would say that he lacked the principles to be *ferox*. One cannot conceive of Plancus as so attached to a body of political or philosophical beliefs that he would commit suicide if his side lost: he was no Cato. Nor did he achieve notoriety by leading his army against fellow citizens, as he tried hard not to go to war in 44–43. There is no evidence of profligacy, rampant sexual immorality, provincial misgovernment, grabbing properties for a song during the proscription much of which occurred during his consulship in 42, or wasting wealth in conspicuous consumption.²⁹ He was certainly rich, but he did not gain his wealth through illegal means, unless one chooses to regard Roman militarism and thus Plancus' triumph as proof of corrupt cultural values.

Much to the frustration of historians who would like to use prosopography to place Plancus socially and politically, we know next to nothing about the women in Plancus' life; their presence is conspicuously absent from the many accounts. In his *Saturnalia* (2.2.6), written in the AD 430s but set in 382, Macrobius reports a tidbit to Plancus' discredit:

Post hunc Caecina Albinus: 'Plancus in iudicio forte amici, cum molestum testem destruere vellet, interrogavit, quia sutorem sciebat, quo artificio se tueretur. Ille urbane respondit: "gallam subigo." Sutorium hoc habetur instrumentum, quod non infacete in adulterii exprobrationem ambiguitate convertit. Nam Plancus in Maevia Galla nupta male audiebat.

After him [Symmachus], Caecina Albinus spoke up. 'When by chance Plancus was in court on behalf of a friend and wanted to destroy a

bothersome witness whom he knew to be a shoemaker, asked by what skills he maintained himself. 'I grind gall-nuts' he replied slickly, for this is an implement used in that trade. Using the double meaning of 'subigere', he thus wittily converted it into a charge of adultery, for Plancus was being bad-mouthed because of adultery with the married Maevia Galla.

This is certainly our Plancus; as presented, the incident is without context but (assuming its reality) best suits the years before he left Italy in 40. Maevia Galla is unknown, but the *nomen* points to social standing outside the Roman aristocracy, and "Galla" is too common to be helpful. The joke depends on the double meaning of *subigere*, primarily "to grind, knead" but secondarily, to engage in sex. The *sutor* ground gall-nuts as part of his occupation, but Plancus adulterously "ground or kneaded" Galla. The Loeb translation misses the off-color joke by making Plancus a cuckold: "for Plancus' reputation was suffering because of Maevia Galla, to whom he was married." The *sutor's* snide comment justifies his own occupation but attacks Plancus' doings. Much better is this: the shoemaker charged "Plancus with adultery, for stories were going round of his association with one Maevia Galla, a married woman."³⁰ We get a pun but leave Plancus without a known wife. Another interesting point is that this is the only slur of sexual misconduct against Plancus. Velleius, who never missed a chance to say something bad about Plancus, does not mention this incident; he must not have known of it because his source (Pollio?) did not bring it up. Romans were fond of hurling charges of sexual immorality against their opponents, and as this is the only such charge against Plancus, it seems safe to conclude that nobody could find anything of significance to use. His faults were subservience, flattery, and switching sides.

Plancus' physical appearance is unknown, as no ancient writer describes him. Two marble statues have been tentatively identified as of Plancus, in both cases because they were found in places associated with him. Neither was labelled Plancus. The evidence is unconvincing, and few experts accept the identification. [Figures 1.3](#) and [1.4](#) are of these statues, included as part of the presentation of evidence, not out of any conviction that either is of Plancus. Both should be left anonymous. For a start, they do not resemble one another: they are of different people. The statue shown in [Figure 1.3](#) is quite well known. R. Paribeni found it in the Temple of Hercules Victor at Tivoli in 1925 and argued that because Plancus was of Tiburtine origins, the statue must be of him. This hypothesis is weak on the face of it, as there must have been a multitude of statues of the many wealthy Romans who had villas in and around Tibur. If I am correct that he was not from Tibur, the hypothesis collapses. Most scholars refer to it as "the general from Tivoli" and date it to roughly 75–50.³¹ A full-sized photograph of the statue stands in the corridor of

the mausoleum, however, so the Italian archaeological authorities convey the impression that Plancus' appearance is known. Kleiner's assessment can be taken as representative of the current majority opinion: "the Tivoli general" was fashioned sometime between 75 and 50 and is an example of "the republican veristic style" or "Romanized Hellenistic type." The muscular torso is topped by the head of a much older man "with lined forehead, bags under his eyes, prominent crow's feet, creased cheeks and neck, and sagging jowls."³² If the statue is not later than 50, its subject is not Plancus. He would only have been about 34 at that time, far younger than this elderly subject, and he had not done anything of sufficient significance to justify a heroic statue of himself: his accomplishments lay several years in the future.

The other statue, [Figure 1.4](#), is a herm found in the early 1800s in the Jardin des Plantes at Lyon, the city which Plancus founded as the colony of Lugdunum in 43. It was originally paired with a herm of the philosopher Zeno of Citium and may have been part of a gallery of portrait herms gracing a garden in the town. They were copies of lost (bronze?) originals and apparently date to the late Julio-Claudian period. Like the general from Tivoli, the anonymous herm from Lyon exhibits many of the artistic features of the veristic style. A recent analysis of the statue concludes that, lacking a certain representation of Plancus for comparison, in the present state of our evidence the portrait must remain anonymous.³³ On chronological grounds this herm has a slightly better chance of being Plancus than does the Tivoli general, as it could have been made soon after the colony's foundation as a commemoration of its *deductor*, say about 40, but the evidence is not convincing. The subject was a real person, probably one prominent in Lugdunum's early years, but we do not know his identity.

Any effort to reassess Plancus, to go beyond sources long available and the repetitive verdicts found in most histories and commentaries, must make liberal use of inference, and the following chapters have much speculation. One chapter's hypotheses ought not to become the next chapter's established facts, but at the same time one can only construct an entire case by building on hypotheses. Extensive reliance on "possibly" and its synonyms is admirably honest but makes for irritating reading.

The next chapter shifts Plancus' family home from Tibur to southern Latium and northern Campania and posits old ties to the locally prominent Tullii Cicerones and the powerful Roman patrician family of the Aemilii Lepidi. These connections helped gain Plancus a position on Caesar's staff in Gaul in 54, and that in turn catapulted him on the path to high office, far beyond any ancestor's accomplishment. [Chapter 3](#) studies Plancus' ten years under Caesar. The following two chapters analyse Plancus' term as governor of Gallia Comata, the foundation of *colonia Raurica* on the bend of the Rhine River, and

his careful maneuvering in the crisis of 44–43. The exchange of letters between him and Cicero allows us to map out his advance and retreat in the Rhone valley. In the fall of 43 Plancus founded *colonia Lugdunum* at the confluence of the Rhone and Saone rivers. [Chapter 6](#) analyses Plancus' role with Antony in the east, from the late summer of 43 through his decision to abandon Antony and join Octavian in 32. In [Chapter 7](#) it is argued that Plancus was with Octavian on the eastern campaign of 32–29 and sometime in this period received an ode from Horace (*carmen* 1.7), an analysis of which is the core of the chapter.



Figure 1.3 Statue found at Tivoli and sometimes identified as Plancus

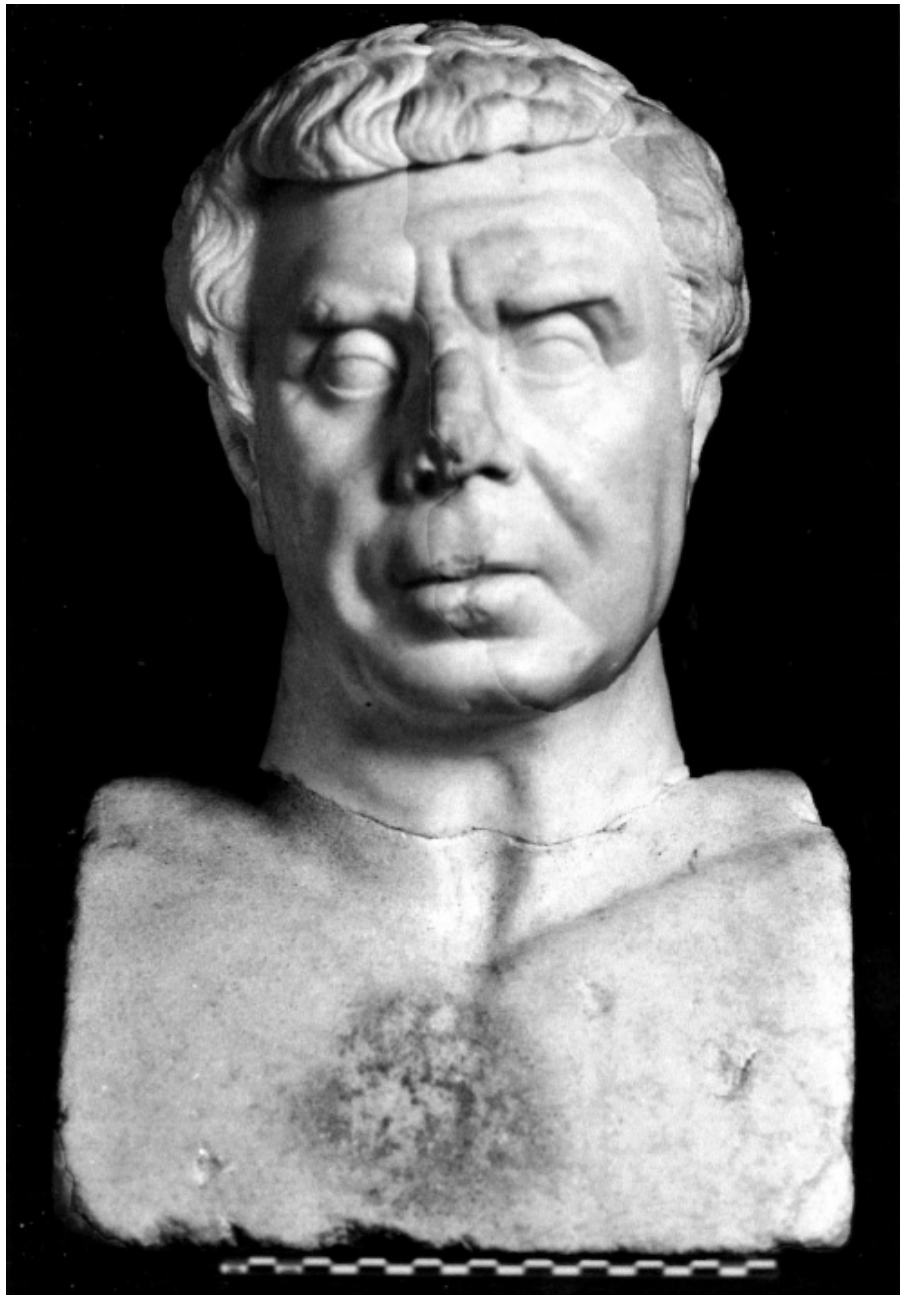


Figure 1.4 Herm found at Lyon and sometimes identified as Plancus

[Chapter 8](#) is the most speculative and doubtless the most controversial in the book, as it attempts to establish Plancus' role in the early Augustan Principate. Prominence all through these years is certain: the Horatian ode, his motion to confer "Augustus" in 27, his reconstruction of the Temple of Saturn in the Forum which he had begun in 42, censorship in 22, and just possibly service as

a senior advisor to the young Tiberius on a diplomatic mission to the east in 20. Prominence, however, may not be the same as influence, and I have tried to penetrate the secrecy that preceded all major governmental decisions. *Why* was Plancus rather than somebody else chosen to make the formal motion conferring “Augustus” on Octavian in January 27? What is the significance of the Temple of Saturn? *Why* was Plancus made a censor in 22? Imperial secrecy makes certainty impossible, but I make the case that Plancus was in the very small group of imperial advisors and councilors. This is not to say that he was the most influential or persuasive, but rather that he was far more important than subsequent historical tradition would have posterity believe. The positions he held are a measure of his standing. On the other hand, that he never received a second consulship reminds us not to overestimate his role.

Since so much of the negative evidence about Plancus comes from writers of the time of Tiberius, notably Velleius Paterculus, it seems appropriate to investigate why this is so. Plancus’ granddaughter Munatia Plancina was the wife of Cn. Calpurnius Piso and a client/protégé of the empress Livia. Piso and Plancina were at the center of the great tragedy of Tiberius’ early years, the death of Germanicus in Syria in 19. Their gross misconduct generated enormous troubles, grief, and embarrassment for the emperor. Piso was brought to trial but escaped conviction for treason by committing suicide; Livia employed her considerable *gratia* or *potentia* and got all charges against Plancina dropped. The pro-Tiberian historian Velleius probably picked up the widespread hatred for Plancina and projected it back to the time of her grandfather, our Plancus. The brief Epilogue traces Plancus’ grandchildren and the fate of the Temple of Saturn, the possible villa near Tibur, and the mausoleum through the centuries.

Often on the stage but steadily behind the scenes, Plancus generally played a supporting role. He served three masters – Caesar, Antony, and Octavian/Augustus – but the extent to which he was an independent actor remains an open question. Where a Latin phrase or term is required, a translation follows. Passages from Cicero’s letters and *Philippics*, unless otherwise noted, are from the translations of D. R. Shackleton Bailey. In citing the letters, I have used the standard form followed by the number assigned by Shackleton Bailey in his chronological compilation: thus, *Fam.* 10.3 = SB 355. I have not put Cicero’s name before the many citations of his letters, but I do use it before his other works. Other Latin translations are mine. Passages from Greek writers are from the Loeb editions of B. Perrin for Plutarch’s lives of Cicero, Caesar, Antony, and Brutus, and of E. Cary for Cassius Dio. For Appian I have used the translations of H. White (Loeb) and J. Carter (Penguin). All citations of Appian are from his *Civil Wars*, so the title is omitted. Dates are BC except for the few specifically labelled AD. When a place appears for the first time its

ancient name is followed by the modern name in parentheses, thus Tibur (Tivoli). Thereafter only the Roman form of the name is used.

Notes

- 1 Citations of Cicero's correspondence are in the familiar form followed by Shackleton Bailey's chronological number. *Fam.* 10.3.3 and 4.2 = SB 355, 358; Suet., *Rel.* 289 Roth. Cicero said that L. Marcius Philippus had behaved similarly (*Att.* 8.3.6 = SB 153) and admitted that he had done it himself (*Fam.* 9.7.3 = SB 178; cf. to Spinther, *Fam.* 1.7 = SB 18). The meaning ranges from strongly censorious to mildly disapproving.
- 2 Velleius' hostility probably derives from Plancus' political foe, Asinius Pollio, and from the politics of his own day, under Tiberius, when Plancus' granddaughter caused difficulties for the emperor.
- 3 Carter 1982 on 7.2. Scholars practically compete in their invective. One novelist is more insidious: in M. Llywelyn's fictional account of Plancus among the Carnutes, a Gallic hero grasps the arrogant Roman's wrist and breaks it by the power of his thought: *Druids* (New York, 1991) chap. 29.
- 4 Osgood 2006, 276–80.
- 5 Pollard's account of Rich in *Dict. Eng. Biog.* 1009–12, reads like many of Plancus: "a time-server of the least admirable type, he was always found on the winning side, and he had a hand in the ruin of most of the prominent men of his time, not a few of whom had been his friends and benefactors." He was always ready "to serve the basest ends of tyranny." Dickens 1964, 144, 211 speaks of him as "unprincipled" and "odious" (144, 211). Other verdicts are similar.
- 6 See Orieux 1970, 116, 139, 160, 196, 441. "One facet of his extraordinary personality was his plasticity. He adapted to everything and everyone; his pliability was appalling... He was a moral invertebrate... On seeing which way the current flowed, he would plunge in and stay with it, guiding but never leading." On the other hand, "Talleyrand was always true to the principles of 1789 and to the Declaration of the Rights of Man"; and "his ideas changed less frequently than the regimes he served," stressing his "continuity and fidelity."
- 7 Jullien 1892; Staehelin 1900 adds nothing to Jullien, and Hanslik's *RE* article (1935) differs little from Drumann-Groebe, *Geschichte Roms* 4.230–35 (1908); cursory for the years after 32.
- 8 Schiff 2010, 297 appears to believe Plancus wrote memoirs reviling Cleopatra: soon after the queen's death "the turncoats wrote the history, Dellius, Plancus and Nicolaus of Damascus first among them."
- 9 Caes., *BG* 5.24–5.; *BC* 1.40; *B. Afr.* 4.1.
- 10 *Fam.* 13.29 = SB 282.
- 11 *CIL* 10.6087 = *ILS* 886. Carter 1982 on Suet., 7.2 calls the epitaph "a stirring roll-call of the high honours of the vanished Republic." The mausoleum has proportions of 3:1, as the diameter is 100 Roman feet and the height to the cornice is 33-1/3. Full discussions: Fellmann 1957; Coarelli 1982, 354–59 compares it with the nearby tomb of L. Sempronius Atratinus which is much less well preserved.
- 12 Suet., *Aug.* 7.2; Vell. 2.91.
- 13 Walzer suggests that Plancus claimed a victory in an area Rome did not conquer until 15 and was thus still alive in that year: 1957, 22–3, 39. See also Wells 1972, esp. 36–7, 45–6.

- 14 By Coarelli 1982, 357–58.
- 15 *Aeneid* 5.700–871; 6.156–235. 337–83, 897–901.
- 16 Bradley 1991, esp. 48–64 for *nutrices*. Caieta should be seen as Aeneas’ surrogate mother, since his “real” mother Venus cannot be thought of as tending him. The literary prototype is Odysseus’ Eurycleia (*Odyssey* 19).
- 17 *Aeneid* 7.1–4. See Williams 1983, chap. 7. He stresses Vergil’s intention to tie the events of Aeneas’ lifetime to those of his own day, but he does not mention Plancus.
- 18 *Aeneid* 3.705ff. for Anchises. Reckford 1961, 254–69, points out that Caieta’s death adds to Aeneas’ “growing loneliness.” Cf. Putnam 1970, 411–12.
- 19 See Fraenkel 1945; Merkelbach 1971, 149–52; Quinn 1968, 65–6 and 176 labels this a “bridge passage.” The prologue for the second half of the epic comes at 7.37. Caieta’s death at the start of book 7 balances that of Palinurus at the end of book 5, and they frame the solemn book 6. Servius, *ad Aen.* 7.1 and Strabo 5.233. “Caieta” is from the Greek *katakaiein*, to burn.
- 20 *Odes* 1.7 and 3.14.28; *Epist.* 1.3.20.
- 21 Vell. 2.67.4 and 83.1–2.
- 22 See also 2.63–3–64.1 for Plancus’ “betrayal” of Decimus Brutus; cf. 74.3. See Bosworth 1972, 449–50, though I do not share his belief that Plancus fell from favor under Augustus. See also Sumner 1970, 257–97; Woodman 1975, 72–305; and Syme 1978a, 45–63: “Where there is a conflict of testimony, Velleius cannot claim benefit of doubt.”
- 23 Tac., *Ann.* 3.15–18; 6.26; and now the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone patre*: brief discussion in the Epilogue.
- 24 *Ad M. Brutum* 25 (1.17) = SB 17. Seneca, *QN* 4 praef.5; cf. Syme 1986, 343. Cicero is polite in letters to Pulcher (*Fam.* book 3), but critical in letters to others; cf. *Att.*, 5.15–16, 6.1= SB 108–09, 115.
- 25 Pollio on Sallust: Gellius, *NA* 10.26 (a letter to Plancus); Suet., *de Gramm.* 10. On Cicero: Seneca, *Suas.*, 6.27.14. On Livy: Quint., *Inst.* 1.5.56. See Pelling 1979, 74–96.
- 26 Pliny, *NH* 9.119–22; cf. Macrobi., *Sat.*, 3.14–18.
- 27 Pliny, *NH* 2.99 and 35.108. The omen of the three suns can be placed in the long list of heavenly warnings catalogued by Osgood 2006, 190–92.
- 28 Syme 1986, 369, cf. 38 and 385 (“smooth and elegant”). Syme’s favorite terms for Plancus were “diplomatic,” “smooth,” and ‘cautious’: see 1939, 95, 158, 179–80, 212; 1964a, 21, 37, 227.
- 29 See Griffin 1977, 17–26, who points to some of the colorful characters of this period who blended action, dissipation, and luxury. Note 53 instances James Bond as a modern counterpart. Velleius 2.83: Antony withdrew support of Plancus because of his rapacity, so Plancus deserted him for Octavian. Far more likely, Plancus changed sides because he disliked Cleopatra’s influence and calculated Antony would lose the inevitable war.
- 30 Author’s translation; “bad-mouthed” is an attempt to catch the colloquial nature of *male audiebat*, “rumored” or as “being ill-spoken of.” The Loeb is by R. A. Kaster (2011), the Columbia University Records of Civilization is by P. V. Davies (New York, 1969). Lewis and Short’s Latin dictionary cite only Suet., *Caesar* 49 and Ausonius, *Epigrams* 142 for a sexual meaning, but that is clearly what Macobius means. For the setting of Macrobius and the *Saturnalia* see Cameron 2011, 231–72.
- 31 The statue is now in the Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo delle Terme. See Paribeni 1925, 244–48; Audin 1965, 59ff. accepts Paribeni, as does Coarelli 1982 359. Most

scholars date it earlier: e.g., Bianchi Bandinelli 1970, 93 and 83–6; Strong 1976, plate 9 and 14, 45f.; Brilliant 1974, 46–7 and Fig. 1.80; Schweitzer 1948, 60, 67, 129, 142–44 with Taf. 63, 65–6.; Kleiner 1992, 31, 35; Cavaliere and Gizzi 1998, 18 and the web site “Mausoleo di Lucio Munazio Planco” from Trip Advisor have good photos of the current display.

32 Kleiner 1992, 31, 35.

33 Rosso 2012, 269 (photos) and 279–82. I wish to thank Hugues Savay-Guerraz, Directeur of the Musée Gallo-Romain de Lyon, for providing me with the photograph reproduced as Figure 1.4 and an extract of Rosso’s article.

2 Family and homeland

The Munatii Planci of southern Latium

It is not possible to reconstruct confidently a family tree for Plancus, to be certain about his family home, or to ascertain the social and political connections which underlie the initial stages of his career in the 50s. This handicapping of historical inquiry is a familiar, if frustrating, problem. Only rarely is there adequate information from the Republic to establish stemmata for other than a few senatorial *gentes* or to be sure about their home area and primary supporters.¹ We can do somewhat better with the second and third points. Horace's *Odes* 1.7, dedicated to Plancus, has long seemed to indicate that Tibur, the modern Tivoli, was his *origo*. In the third century AD the commentator Porphyry said that Tibur was his home town: "*Plancus enim inde fuit oriundus*." This statement has gone unquestioned but it is not convincing. Porphyry cited no evidence, was not interested in such mundane information as a subject's home town, and seems to have simply inferred from the poem itself: in which case the remark is without value. To be sure, Munatii are attested at Tibur, but the earliest of them lack the *cognomen* Plancus. Munatii Planci are on record as businessmen, presumably slave traders, at Delos and elsewhere by 100 BC. But they and others recorded in the east are not known to have been from Tibur and could just as well have been from elsewhere, expressing their gratitude to the patron deity of commerce. These traders' wealth financed the construction of the enormous temple complex to Hercules Victor on the southern slope below the city.²

Horace, who likely knew Plancus, says no more than that Tibur was a favorite residence, likely a villa for escape from Rome – "*Tibur tuus*" need not mean that this town was the ancestral *origo*.³ If Plancus' *tribus* was known to be that of Tibur, the Camilia, our conclusions would be different; but his epitaph at Caieta omits his tribe and no other source provides it. A

transposition of Plancus' home and reinterpretation of scattered evidence yields a workable hypothesis that the family was from southern Latium and his tribe the Aemilia. This in turn may give us some possible patrons of Plancus and perhaps his ancestors.

The first six sections of this chapter set out the evidence for Plancus' ancestors and immediate family, the important friendship with Cicero, shift the Munatian *gens*' homeland to the area of Formiae-Caieta, and make a case that the Aemilii Lepidi were among their patrons.⁴ The final section sets out the conclusions and provides a tentative family tree.

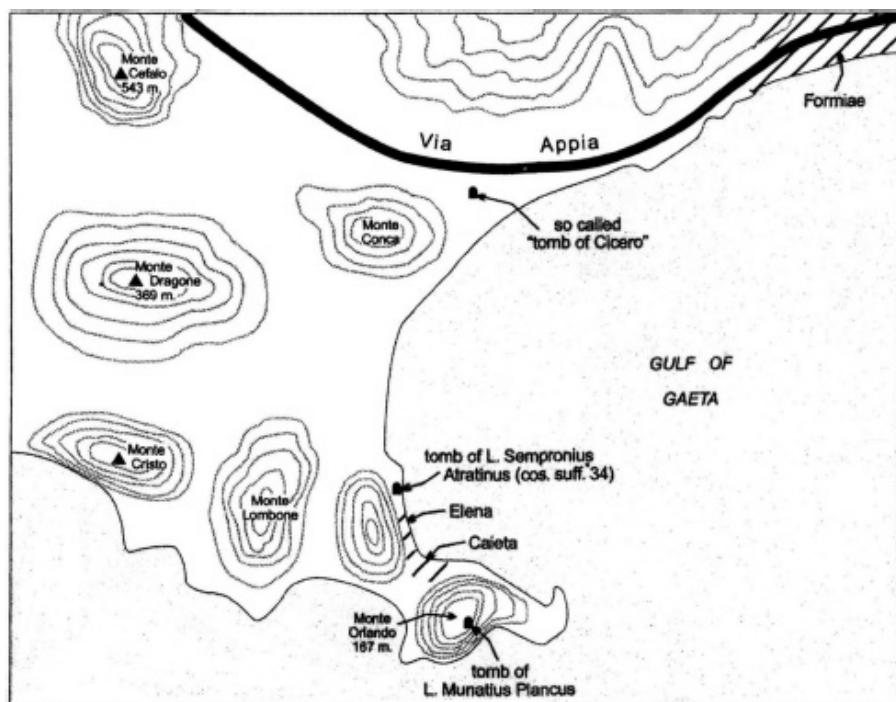


Figure 2.1 Caieta and its environs [whole page]

Homeland and Plancus' immediate family

The inscription over the doorway of Plancus' tomb at Caieta states that he was the fourth consecutive generation to have the *praenomen* Lucius, and the *tria nomina* indicate that they were all Roman citizens. Since Plancus was probably born in or by 84 (calculating from a consulship in 42 at the required minimum age of 42),⁵ and if one allows at a rough guess thirty years per generation, his father was born about 115, his grandfather about 145, and his great-grandfather about 175: the Munatii Planci had been *cives Romani* for a respectably long time. On the other hand, Tibur, a *civitas foederata* from 338,

only received the franchise at the conclusion of the Social War of 90–88. If the family was indeed Tiburtine, its citizenship long antedated that of the city.⁶

There is no reason to try to determine a common homeland and ancestor for all Munatii,⁷ as only the Planci attained political prominence in the Republic. Plancus' branch of the *gens* evidently favored the *praenomen* Lucius for its eldest sons, with Caius perhaps as the next choice. Division of the *gens* into multiple branches may have occurred in the early second century, about the time of the great-grandfather's birth.⁸ The antiquity of the *cognomen* Plancus is uncertain, as it is not attested anterior to a businessman honored at Delos shortly before 90.⁹ The text of Plancus' epitaph implies that the great-grandfather was a Plancus. Like many *cognomina*, such as Ahenobarbus ("Bronzebeard"), Cato ("shrewd"), or Brutus ("dull, stupid"), it may refer to a physical peculiarity of a remote ancestor Munatius, "flatfoot." More attractively, it may derive from *plango* "to strike" and allude to a warlike character.¹⁰

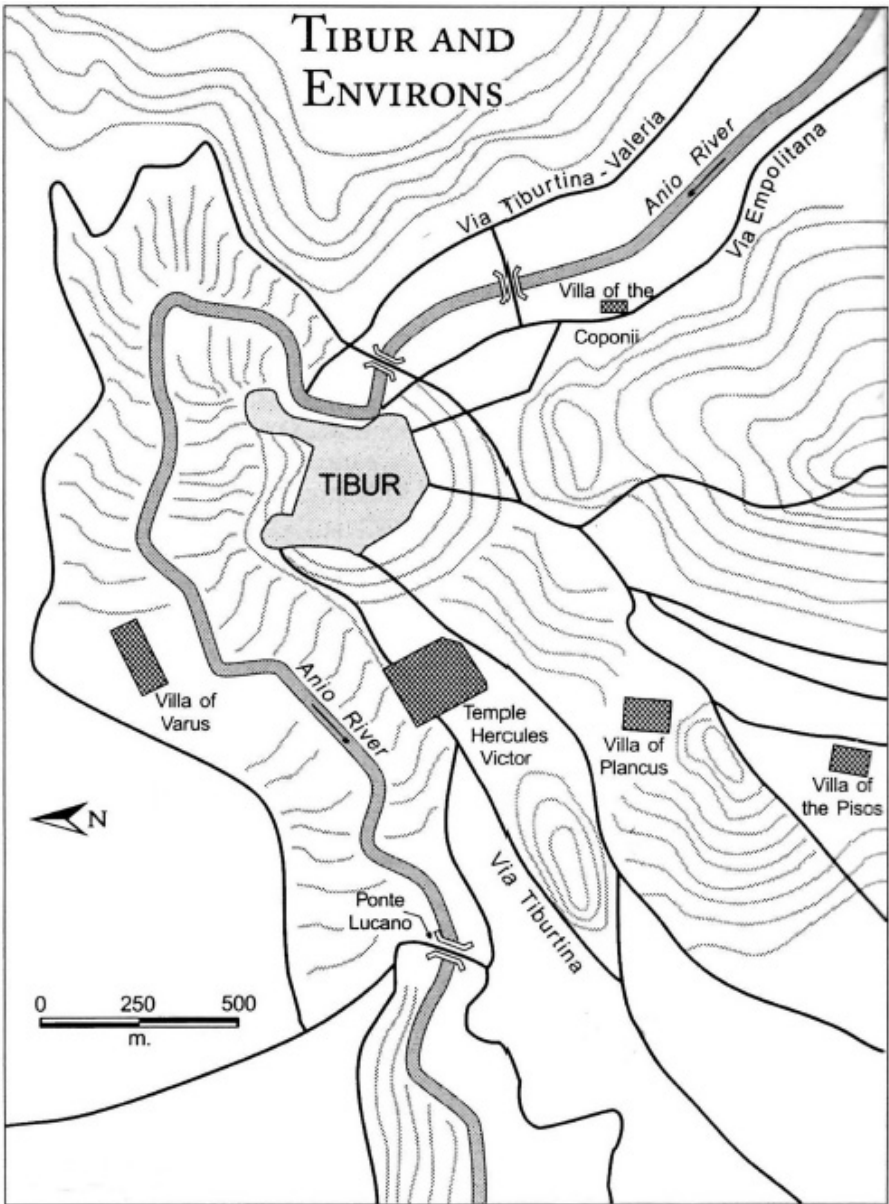


Figure 2.2 Tibur and its environs

Plancus' decision to allude to his *proavus* is peculiar, as formal nomenclature in epitaphs and elsewhere was generally confined to the father and grandfather. The text of the epitaph must reflect Plancus' preferences as to what to include and omit. Political tact probably explains the omission of service under Caesar and Antony and that he proposed "Augustus." An explanation for the ancestry is that he was commemorating at least four generations of local residence and citizenship. The area of Formiae moved up

from *civitas sine suffragio* to full *civitas* in 188 and was registered in the Aemilian tribe.¹¹ A speculation to provide a historical setting is that Plancus *proavus* was the earliest direct ancestor to have been born a citizen, his progenitors *Latini* from or near the Latin colony of Beneventum founded in 268.¹²

Plancus' father is known only as an acquaintance of Cicero; how close this connection was cannot be determined. A Munatius served as legate on Euboea in 87; as a legate he was a senator. Chronologically he could well be Plancus' father, but neither *nomen* nor *cognomen* is attested for him. If the legate was Lucius Plancus *pater*, this military experience in the family might have influenced Caesar's willingness to take on Plancus as a legate in 54. Inscriptional evidence from Delos dating to the 90s yields a "L. Munatius C.f. Plancus" whom the "*Italicei et Graeci qui Deli negotiantur*" commemorated with a statue. The businessmen at Delos, quite likely slave traders given the island's pre-eminence in that occupation, do not state whether they are honoring a fellow merchant or some official such as a legate. This Delian honoree is not Plancus' father because he is "C.f." and not "L.f." If he is the legate of 87, as has been assumed,¹³ then the legate is not Plancus' father who was son of a Lucius (the Caieta epitaph). The question remains open; I suggest that the legate is Plancus' father and the Delian honoree a (distant?) cousin. (See [Figure 2.3](#) at the end of this chapter for a stemma of the Munatii Planci.)¹⁴

Plancus had at least two siblings, a brother and a sister. The brother was evidently named Caius at birth but was subsequently adopted in unrecorded circumstances by a Plautius and became L. Plautius Plancus.¹⁵ The sister is unknown but a genealogical necessity: Plancus was *avunculus* (maternal uncle) of the suffect consul of 31, M. Titius, whose mother must be a Munatia married to a Titius.¹⁶ The strong-willed tribune of 52, T. Munatius Plancus Bursa, has regularly been held to be another brother because Asconius labels him *frater*. Shackleton Bailey has suggested that "frater" here means "cousin," and given Cicero's strong friendship with Plancus and Plotius Plancus and the fact that he never mentions Bursa with either of the other two, the conjecture should probably be accepted.¹⁷ If this is correct, once his brother had been adopted out Plancus was the sole male heir and will have inherited most of his father's property; some may have been a legacy to the son adopted out of the family, and the sister had a dowry. It's a safe guess that the Munatii Planci were comfortably well-off, probably equestrian until one of them entered the Senate (the legate of 87?), but we do not know his financial worth or the extent or location of his property. He was certainly well-off, if not in the top tier of society. He must have owned the land on which he built his mausoleum. If this monumental tomb was on family property rather than land acquired recently by Plancus, it adds force to the hypothesis that the Munatii Planci were from

the area around Formiae. If the estate was considerable, it will have been helpful in meeting the high costs of Roman political life.¹⁸ If he purchased the Tiburtine villa rather than inherited it, that also indicates considerable wealth. Further, Plancus financed the reconstruction of the Temple of Saturn at Rome, funding it from the spoils of his campaign in 43. It is doubtful that the project consumed all of the *manubiae*, and what was left over will have gone into his private coffers. Dowry and family connections from an unattested wife will certainly have been equally welcome.¹⁹ Cicero himself had a villa near Formiae, his *Formianum*, which is first attested in 66 but might have been a family possession from earlier.²⁰

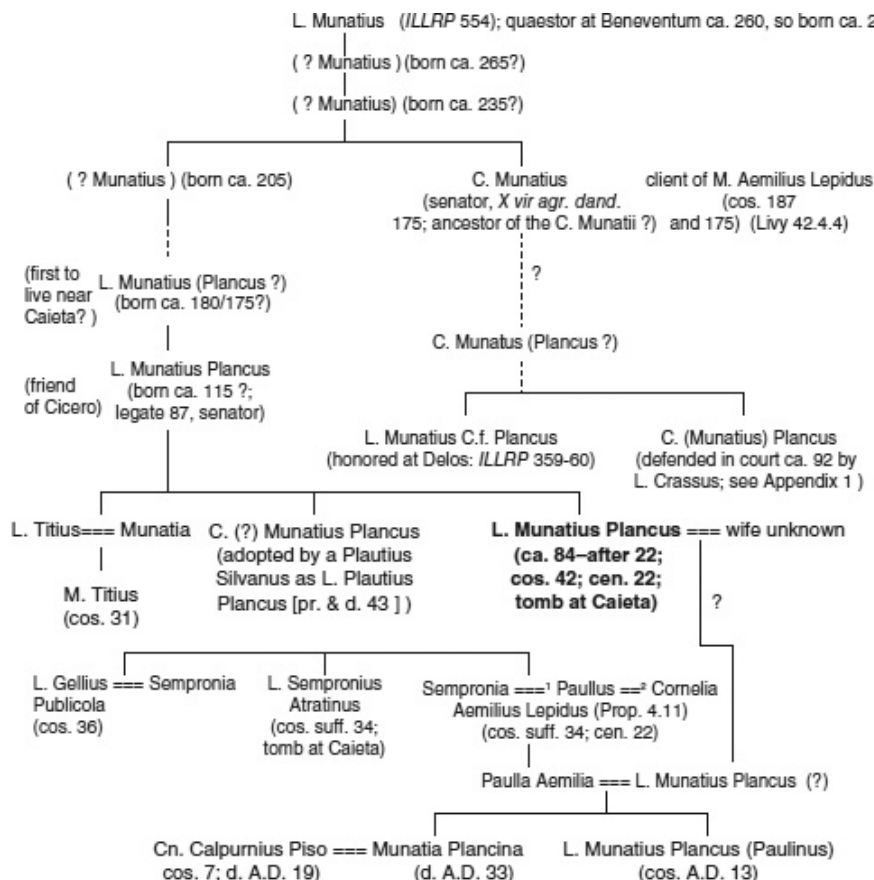


Figure 2.3 Conjectural stemma of the Munatii Planci. Few of these relationships are certain; the fixed points of reference are the birth by 84 of L. Munatius Plancus (cos. 42) and the statement on his epitaph that he is the fourth consecutive generation with the praenomen Lucius.

The friendship between the Munatii Planci and the Tullii

Cicerones

Nothing is known of Plancus's youth except that he studied for an unspecified amount of time under Cicero when a boy (teenager?) and doubtless owed something of his later fame as an orator to him. The period of studies is undated, but around 70 into the 60s is attractive, precisely the years when Cicero was rapidly ascending the *cursus honorum* from the aedileship to the praetorship in 66 and establishing himself as the leading orator and barrister of Rome. This point is worth pursuing in some detail, as it may offer reasons to place Plancus' *origo* in southern Latium rather than in Tibur. Cicero and Suetonius provide basic but disappointingly bald information, barely enough to form the basis for a hypothesis. Suetonius says only "*Munatius Plancus, Ciceronis discipulus, orator habetur insignis*" ("Munatius Plancus, a pupil of Cicero, was considered a famous orator").²¹ Cicero's letters are a bit more helpful. His tutelage indicates something more than mere acquaintance with Plancus' father, and two letters to Plancus in 46 and 44 state that there was real friendship involved.²² Cicero stresses that the friendship antedates Plancus' birth, that he has known Plancus since his boyhood (*pueritia*), that he has watched with pleasure as Plancus developed intellectual tastes similar to his own, that his *amor* for Plancus has grown over the years, and that, in short, no one is an older friend than Cicero.

We do not know how Plancus' father and Cicero came into contact, but a possibility is that the Tullii Cicerones and Munatii Planci may have known one another for quite some time, perhaps moving in the same social circles in southern Latium in the second century BC, perhaps having overlapping commercial interests. Both families were of equestrian rank until Plancus' father and then Cicero made it to the Senate. This friendship is another pointer that the homeland of the Munatii Planci was in the vicinity of Formiae, reasonably close to that of the Tullii Cicerones at Arpinum. Another possibility, set out in [Appendix I](#), is that Plancus *pater* and Cicero came to know one another in the circle of students around the famous lawyer and orator L. Licinius Crassus, perhaps in the 90s. In this case the Munatii Planci may for a time have looked to Crassus and his descendants for help in advancing their ambitions. There is no sign, however, of ties between our Plancus and Crassus' son the triumvir. By the 50s Plancus had attached himself to Caesar, as is explored in the following chapter.

A single anecdote points to activity in the courts, as is only to be expected of someone trained by Cicero and having political ambitions.²³ Caelius Rufus is a contemporary parallel. Legal work opened wider horizons by earning gratitude and patronage from powerful and wealthy clients, especially if Cicero provided recommendations, and successful prosecutions could gain advances in the

Senate. We have no way of knowing whether Plancus was given property by grateful clients, perhaps in their wills, as happened with Cicero fairly often. The one recorded incident is insufficient evidence for a career at the bar, and indeed, from about age 30 in 54 he was with Caesar in Gaul and then during the civil war, not in Rome where the courts were located. We are thus left to wonder about the grounds on which Suetonius said Plancus was an *orator insignis*. Unrecorded but eloquent and persuasive speeches in the 20s under the evolving Augustan state are possibilities. Although we lack the specifics, the tutelage from Cicero was surely not wasted.

The *necessitudo* between Cicero and Plancus: more than simple *amicitia*

Cicero's purpose in stressing the long-term friendship between him and Plancus (and the latter's brother as well) was to play on Plancus' sense of *fides*, *pietas*, and *officium* – to make him feel obliged to do what Cicero wanted him to do. Hence on one occasion Cicero says he feels “driven by love to write,” on another “I admonish you as I would a son,” and yet again “impelled by concern for your well-being, I have written rather severely” (that is, “more severely than I would to someone I knew less well”).²⁴ In 44–43 Plancus was the proconsul of Gallia Comata, whereas Cicero held no official position at all, so he was clearly relying on an old and sincere friendship when he wrote in these terms to such an important person. Only in the letters to M. Junius Brutus, bound to Cicero by shared intellectual interests, does Cicero employ a tone of equal familiarity. The tone in the letters to the contemporary governors C. Asinius Pollio, M. Aemilius Lepidus, and Q. Cornificius is correct and formal; he was not as close to them.

Nor are all the declarations of friendship on one side. Regarded as the most elegant writer among Cicero's correspondents,²⁵ Plancus readily and sincerely recognized the bond between them. Because of his father's friendship, he himself has followed the lead of Cicero's teaching (*observantia*) for Cicero since his *pueritia*, and this has become a *mutuus amor* (reciprocal affection). Cicero is the only person for whom Plancus feels a *patria sanctitas* to follow his *consilia*. In other words, Plancus reveres Cicero as a son should a father. In another letter Plancus says “I have wanted you to approve of me not less than you love me, and I have sought you no less as my defender when I am at fault than as the herald of my good deeds when I do right.”

Elsewhere, Plancus says Cicero is the first to know of his plans, and he could not have shown more concern for his own son than he had for Cicero – a phrase which nicely balances Cicero's claim to address Plancus as he would a

son. (If Plancus was not just writing in terms of flattery and metaphor, the phrase may also be evidence that Plancus had a son in 44/43. In this case, the son became the father of L. Plancus the consul of AD 13 and Munatia Plancina, but he either died young or did not pursue a political career, as there is no trace of him otherwise.) In June 43 Plancus concludes a letter by affirming that as the days pass he holds Cicero ever dearer and that Cicero's meritorious deeds have daily sharpened Plancus' concerns to remain worthy of his love and good opinion. "I hope that through the propriety of my duties I may soon make your kindnesses to me all the more gratifying to you." This emphasis on Plancus fulfilling his *officia* in response to Cicero's *beneficia* is language appropriate for a client to use toward his patron. Finally, in the last dateable letter in the Ciceronian correspondence, written July 28, 43, Plancus continues to stress the friendship between them, says that his words of thanks cannot repay Cicero's *beneficia*, and hopes to prove himself worthy of them by his deeds. "Never shall I forget how much I owe to you."²⁶ How much of this is smoothness or hypocrisy and how much sincerity, on both sides, will be considered later, for the answer can only emerge through an analysis of the crisis that arose after the assassination of Caesar.

The word repeatedly used to describe the relationship between Cicero and Plancus is not *amicitia*, which can vary from true affection to polite courtesy, but the stronger *necessitudo*. This has been defined as "a quasi-familial relationship (Fest. 158L) ... a form of *amicitia* of deeper significance than other forms, and therefore of greater meaning (political and personal) than mere 'friendship'."²⁷ *Necessitudo* passes from one generation to the next. Thus, we find Cicero speaking of the "*paternas enim magnas et veteres et iustissimas necessitudines*" between himself and L. Plautius Plancus.²⁸ The plurals reinforce the point, and "*paternas*" can be literally "from your father" or inherited from earlier generations: enduring and firmly grounded *necessitudo*. Plancus echoes these sentiments about his brother in a letter to Cicero.²⁹

Another word may be of some significance. In the letter in which Cicero reveals the *necessitudo* with Plancus' father, he says this tie is with Plancus' *domus*. This is a broad term, for *domus* incorporates the entire "house" over multiple generations and includes cognates – relatives on the mothers' sides.³⁰ Cicero may here be alluding to unspecified kinship ties between the Cicerones and Planci, or between them and a third party, possibly well in the past. There is no evidence for such a connection, but the possibility ought to be kept in mind, rather similar to that between the Tullii Cicerones, Marii, and Gratidii.

This friendship, then, was more than a casual acquaintance. In other respects, however, the correspondence is frustratingly unfulfilling. One has the impression that the ties were such that neither party felt any need to recall particular instances where this *necessitudo* led to specific actions. Much

desired but missing are the sorts of passing comments that Cicero makes from time to time in letters to others, for instance, that he was a close friend of the Aelii Lamiae, who were from Formiae and had business interests in Africa and either Syria or Bithynia; or M. Caelius Rufus, who also studied under Cicero and whose family had commercial interests in Africa; or P. Sestius, whose family owned property at Cosa; or Q. and D. Valerius from Sora, said to be “*vicini et familiares mei*.”³¹

It is regrettable that neither writer mentions Plancus’ mother, wife, sister, or mutual friends other than Plancus’ legate in 43, C. Furnius. There is nothing concrete about Plancus’ father beyond what has already been noted, though the statement that Cicero knew Plancus’ father before Plancus was born may take us back to the 90s when Cicero was in his mid-teens and may indicate that Cicero’s father knew the elder Plancus. Cicero’s father was more or less confined to home by poor health,³² so the *necessitudo* may have originated in the Auruncan and Volscian lands of southern Latium. How strong all these possibilities are will become clearer shortly, but certainly Plancus’ family tomb at Caieta is compatible with the inference that the Plancus *origo* was southern Latium and not Tibur. These ties impose only moral, not legal, obligations. As we will see, Plancus kept his own counsel and made up his own mind. Deep, long-standing ties with Cicero did not compel him to do as his old teacher wanted. By the time epistolary exchange with Cicero opens in 44, Plancus was developing new and increasingly close ties with Julius Caesar and his supporters, and thus acquiring a different perspective on political life than that afforded by his old teacher. Unfortunately, we have no knowledge of Plancus’ correspondence with others; their desires may have been at variance with and even more persuasive than Cicero’s, especially if reinforced by the demands of high politics and several legions, as was the case with Lepidus and Pollio. Couriers were transmitting copious messages between the participants in the political crisis of 44–43, and Cicero’s letters give us only a glimpse into this activity.

The Munatii Planci and Aemilii Lepidi

The Munatii Planci had important connections with other households than the Tulii Cicerones. Local prominence over the years likely resulted in increasing friendship with the notables of the vicinity and acquaintanceship and subsequent ties of clientship with leading members of Roman society. Roman senators sought to expand their political *amicitiae* (“friendships” in the sense of alliances as well as cordiality) by promoting the political ambitions of the new citizens and in rare cases introducing them into the Senate. In 173 a

certain C. Munatius was the junior member of the ten-man commission which distributed land in the Ager Ligustinus et Gallicus region of Cisalpine Gaul. Munatius must have been a senator, though he does not appear to have climbed many rungs on the political ladder. This is not surprising, as most senators passed their entire careers as back-benchers. If Munatius was from an area only enfranchised in 188, it was a substantial achievement for him to have held even the quaestorship at Rome, the office which would have allowed appointment to the Senate by the censors. How did this *domi nobilis* (municipal worthy) come to be in the Senate?

A few tantalizing hints tie the Munatii Planci to the patrician Aemilii Lepidi, and the connection may have endured to at least the censorship of 22, which Plancus held with Paullus Aemilius Lepidus, nephew of his consular colleague of 42. The head of the land commission of 173 was the most influential Roman of the day, M. Aemilius Lepidus, consul in 187 and 175, censor in 179, and both Pontifex Maximus and *princeps senatus* from 179 to his death in 152.³³ For the present purposes it is sufficient to note that throughout his long career he was closely associated with the development of much of Cisalpine Gaul: the construction of the Via Aemilia from Ariminum (Rimini) on the Adriatic to Placentia (Piacenza) on the Po, senior member of the board of three for the foundation of the citizen colonies at Parma and Mutina in 183, and then head of the ten-man commission in 173.³⁴ In order to maintain such a successful political life over this long period, Lepidus must have had many contacts among the senatorial aristocracy and been steadily on the lookout to expand his political supporters (*clientela*) by attracting men of substance and promise wherever he could find them.

Lepidus was also a prosperous businessman, as influential in the economic development of southern Latium as he was in opening up Cisalpine Gaul. When aedile in 193 he began construction of the *porticus Aemilia* and an *emporium* along the Tiber embankment at Rome, buildings that served his own interests as well as the public good. Some years later it emerges that he possessed estates near Tarracina, for in 179 he is on record as building a breakwater there to enhance his ability to move produce to northern markets. He almost certainly owned a residence in the vicinity, and the area may have been his and his descendants' primary home away from Rome.³⁵ In short, the Aemilii Lepidi were a (and perhaps the) dominant Roman family in this section of Latium, their primacy symbolized by their great wealth,³⁶ the expanse of the Aemilian tribe, and its inclusion of many local notables.

Formiae and Fundi were in the Aemilian tribe. The Aemilii themselves were in the Palatina, but must have owned a great deal of property in the area where the tribe named for them expanded. Whether Lepidus influenced this particular decision is uncertain, as in 188 his first consulship was on the

horizon (187) and he was some years from the peak of his powers in the Senate. If the Planci were from the region of Formiae, they were presumably enrolled in the Aemilia tribe: it and not the Camilia of Tibur should be the *tribus* of Plancus.

The C. Munatius on the land commission of 173 may not have been a Plancus or even a remote kinsman of our Plancus. It seems reasonable, however, to suggest as a working hypothesis that the Munatii, enfranchised by 188 and prominent in the area of Formiae, became clients of M. Aemilius Lepidus. He in turn as their patron promoted the ambition of C. Munatius by securing his advancement via holding the quaestorship into the Senate when censor in 179 and an appointment to the land commission in 173. Given the power of the Aemilii, at least one of whom made it to the consulship in every generation for many years, any ties the Munatii Planci could foster with them would be of immense help in advancing both social standing and political ambitions, even on the local level. Favorable words in the right ears surely assisted many a *domi nobilis*' ascent of the political and social ladder.

Lepidus may have done more than initiate the Munatii into Roman political life, for he also began a tie between the Lepidi and Planci which lasted through successive generations. Unfortunately, there is no trace of the Munatii for the next seventy-five to eighty years, and if they ceased the pursuit of political careers at Rome, they will have dropped out of the Senate back into the *ordo equester*. There was a fairly steady movement into and out of the Senate, and it may have been the exception rather than the rule for lower-ranking families to provide senators in every generation. Roman political life required a combination of ambition, aptitude, and an ever-increasing amount of money as the cost of politics steadily grew. Many felt it was not worth the effort and cost, given the intense competition and slight chance for outsiders to reach the higher offices, which opened the way to military commands and enrichment through warfare and provincial exploitation. In other words, the Munatii Planci may have opted to devote their energies to accumulating wealth and land by building up commercial activities from a home base near Caieta. Put another way, the senator of 173 may have been the only Plancus with political ambitions at Rome for a long time. There is no evidence for local political life, but it is certainly likely. Sons of senators not in the Senate themselves were in the equestrian order, one of several factors which helped bind these two broad social classes.³⁷

Lepidus' descendants, the brothers L. Aemilius Paullus and M. Aemilius Lepidus (consuls in 50 and 46), owned property in the neighborhood of Caieta-Tarracina, which had presumably been in the family at least since the 180s.³⁸ When the consul of 46 served a second term in 42, replacing the condemned assassin of Caesar, Dec. Brutus, his colleague was L. Munatius Plancus whom

Caesar had nominated within a year prior to his assassination. When Plancus became censor in 22, his colleague was the son of the consul of 50.³⁹ A marriage tie is suspected in the next generation, leading to a Munatius Plancus Paulinus.

Plancus and Tibur (Tivoli)

If the preceding lines of thought are correct, what can be known or surmised about Plancus' association with Tibur? Horace's seventh ode of the first book, dated to about 30 and examined in detail later on, is the earliest proof of Plancus' ties to the town. There are a few slender indications that the connection might have begun in a previous generation, and while no one of them is close to decisive, they provide a reasonable explanation when taken together.

Tibur was only incorporated into the Roman state as part of the comprehensive enfranchisement at the end of the Social War in 90–88. By this time a number of wealthy Romans had luxury villas in the vicinity. The scattered references tend to be about senators and in political contexts, but we can assume wealthy persons outside the Senate were also present.⁴⁰ The great temple of Hercules Victor (or Invictus) dominated Tibur and was the center of a complex and wealthy economic life. Particularly in Italy, Hercules was a patron of merchants and commerce, and his cult was widely popular. Enormous wealth poured into Italy in the second and first centuries, much of it controlled by businessmen from Latium and Campania who had offices at Delos and throughout the Greek East, and to a lesser extent in the West. In the 80s the temple was reconstructed on a lavish scale and henceforward occupied a huge platform in vaulted substructures to the southwest of the city. Surely a growing number of *equites*, many of them with ties of blood and society to senators, owned property in and around Tibur. Some perhaps made it their favored and permanent residence and developed the ambitions and contacts to enter politics at Rome. It would have been entirely appropriate for a Munatius Plancus of the late second or early first century to have acquired a villa near Tibur, to have moved in the high society of the town, and for him or a son to have political ambitions. Such a move would not have meant abandoning other ties in the area of Caieta-Formiae; it was rather a broadening of horizons.⁴¹

A working hypothesis that one of Plancus' forebears established a residence at Tibur might provide the setting in which the family achieved prominence there and came to be associated with other Romans who had villas in the neighborhood or lived there permanently.⁴² Plancus' younger brother Caius was adopted by a Plautius who has never been identified. He is perhaps a

member of the Plautii Silvani from Trebula Sufenas (Ciciliano) a few miles above Tibur; he or a kinsman built a drum-shaped mausoleum (like Plancus') at Ponte Lucano over the Anio downstream from Tibur. They also likely had a fashionable villa at and moved in the society of Tibur. Some Plautii Silvani were senators, others equestrians; an Aulus Plautius was a legate in 90 and 89, and his brother (?) Marcus was a tribune in 89; they were in business and presumably owned property at Minturnae where inscriptions attest their slaves and freedmen. Another Aulus was son of an *eques* and became praetor in 51.⁴³ Minturnae is only a few miles along the coast from the conjectural home of the Planci, and it may be worth noting that M. Plautius Silvanus (praetor AD 24) adopted a son from the Aelii Lamiae, aboriginal inhabitants of Formiae.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, we cannot trace the adoption of C. Plancus by a Plautius with as much certainty. One would expect the adoptive father to have been a Lucius, passing the *praenomen* on to the adopted son, but the known Plautii seem not to have used this name. The generation of Aulus and Marcus Plautius fits chronologically, as these men were contemporaries of Plancus' father, so perhaps another brother or a cousin named Lucius conducted the adoption. There is, it must be admitted, neither evidence for this hypothesis nor, for that matter, proof that the adopting Plautius was a Silvanus. No wife or descendant of L. Plautius Plancus is known.

The Munatii Planci and other families

At some point a feud developed between the Planci and another family residing around Tibur, the Coponii. A certain T. Coponius won Roman citizenship before 90 by securing the conviction of a Roman on criminal charges; his grandsons Titus and Caius Coponius are mentioned by Cicero in 56. The latter evidently became praetor in 49, escaped prosecution in 43/42, and survived to criticize Plancus in 32.⁴⁵ Whether this attack was an isolated incident or a flare-up in a running feud is unknown, but the families could have begun a rivalry at Tibur and carried it over to the Roman Senate when opportunity arose in the heated exchanges that formed the preliminaries to the Actium campaign.

A villa at Tibur might also be part of the background to the marriage of Munatia Plancina to Cn. Calpurnius Piso (cos. 7), son of the homonymous suffect of 23. Now the *gens Calpurnia* was registered in the *tribua Menenia*, which was located just south of Tibur and at Trebula Suffenas, as well as other more distant places. Tradition, but no reliable evidence, accords the name "Villa of the Pisos" to ruins not far from those said to be the "Villa of Plancus." All are but a short distance from the Temple of Hercules.⁴⁶ (We return to this

topic in the Epilogue.)

The haphazard manner in which the evidence has survived from antiquity makes for uneven knowledge of Roman history. Prosopographers' attempts to discern family friendships, factions, and feuds are particularly fragile and often criticized as unconvincing in various degrees. But in the absence of political parties, personal and family groupings, admittedly imperfectly understood, are essential if we are to make sense of Roman politics.⁴⁷ Conclusions become even more inferential outside the officeholding aristocracy, for here there is still less evidence of blood relationships and affiliations of other types. Building from the evidence laid out in the preceding pages, the remainder of this chapter argues for the existence of a previously unnoticed network of relationships that associate the Munatii Planci with several other families in Tibur and the towns of southern Latium, notably along the coast from Tarracina to the mouth of the Liris valley and in the hills to Arpinum. Here is the homeland of the *gens Munatia* of the Aemilian tribe, the ancestral properties, and the tomb that Plancus constructed.

Contrary to what has been claimed, many Romans did feel a strong emotional attachment to family and ancestral properties. Cicero and his brother were devoted to their father's estates near Arpinum, and the Aemilii Lepidi can be traced for several generations in the vicinity of Tarracina-Circeii. Augustus and Vespasian both died in their fathers' houses, and Vespasian was deeply attached to family estates near Rieti and to his grandmother's home near Cosa.⁴⁸ Surely Plancus' mausoleum is more appropriately sited on a hereditary estate than at a seaside vacation villa, and the same can be said of that of the Sempronii Atratinii nearby. Here, too, we should seek the origin of the *necessitudo* between Cicero and the Munatii Planci.

Plancus' association with one other family, the Antistii, remains to be considered. The earliest surviving letter from Cicero to Plancus is a *littera commendaticia* from the spring of 46.⁴⁹ Cicero knew that Plancus was high in Caesar's favor after eight years' service and was marked for rapid advancement. Cicero has a favor to ask of Caesar, feared that Caesar was inclined to deny it, and hoped Plancus could persuade him to be gracious. He approached Plancus as both friend and one able to influence Caesar, though we are not told precisely why he was in a position to render assistance; whether he also wrote directly to Caesar is unknown. Claiming to act on Caesar's orders, Antony had confined Cicero at Brundisium (Brindisi) when Cicero returned to Italy after abandoning the Republican cause in the wake of Pharsalus in 48. In October 47 Caesar had removed Antony in disgust at his misconduct, but Cicero was still on uncertain footing with regard to Caesar in early 46 and evidently thought it safer to approach him through his rising lieutenant, Cicero's old pupil and friend Plancus.

First Cicero recalls the *necessitudo* between himself and Plancus' father, a tie which as we have already observed Plancus has inherited and which has grown over the years. Whether Cicero and Plancus had had much contact while Plancus had been on Caesar's staff in Gaul is unknown. Since Cicero seems to have corresponded with his brother Lucius fairly regularly in these years, reasonably frequent letters are at least a possibility; and Plancus may have had opportunities to return to Rome over the winters for personal visits. This letter, however, does allow the inference that Cicero was concerned to warm up a friendship which had cooled due to lack of contact. The matter remains unresolved. Next, Cicero summarizes his *familiaritas* with C. Ateius Capito, who had been unstintingly loyal and generous to him. Capito stands to receive five-sixths of the estate of a *propinquus* (relative), T. Antistius. The remaining sixth, not in dispute, was 3 million sesterces, so Capito's legacy is a very handsome sum, 15 million. Capito feared that for reasons Cicero explains in sections 3–4, Caesar will break the provisions of the will and thereby prevent him from getting his money. Evidently Capito had asked Cicero to lend assistance and then Cicero wrote Plancus on his own. There is no sign that Capito knew Plancus at all, or he would presumably have written him directly and not involved Cicero as a third party.

Antistius is barely more than a name. We do not know how he was related to Capito. Cicero tells Plancus that Antistius had been proquaestor in Macedonia in 49 and had been trapped there when the fighting spread to Greece over the winter. Like many others, he had tried to avoid taking sides and evidently did stay clear of the combat. After the battle of Pharsalus in summer of 48 he went to his *necessarius* A. Plautius in Bithynia. Though Cicero does not specify this, Plautius was apparently the Republican governor of that province. Antistius met Caesar who had sent him to Rome without rendering a decision regarding his conduct in the war. Unfortunately, Antistius had fallen sick and died on Corcyra (Corfu) (sec. 3–4). There the matter rests, and Capito is thus on pins and needles over whether he will be allowed to receive the sum left him in the will made in 50 ("*Paulo et Marcello consulibus*," sec 4).

In the final portion of the letter (secs. 6–8), Cicero reminds Plancus that Capito had always been supportive of Caesar and in fact Antistius would have preferred to join Capito in 49 because he knew him to be Caesarian in politics (sec. 3). Cicero even goes so far as to assert that Capito's *auctoritas* had influenced Caesar to be "*moderatioꝛ temperatioꝛque*" (more moderate and even-tempered) in the civil strife. In conclusion, Plancus will prove his *benevolentia* (good will) for Cicero and establish his *necessitudo* with Capito by doing what Cicero asks.

As is to be expected, in shaping his appeal Cicero is selective in what he

says. Had Capito been as strong a Caesarian as Cicero implies, he ought not to have been so fearful that Caesar would block the will and claim the money for the state. He seems in fact to have been a late convert to Caesar's side and, worse, to have backed Cato and the optimates when tribune in 55 and on into 54. Only when expelled from the Senate in 50 did he decide to become a Caesarian.⁵⁰ The outcome is lost to history, but on balance Capito probably got his money.⁵¹

Cicero probably approached Plancus on this matter for more reasons than his possible influence with Caesar. The letter gives a few clues but leaves the rest unsaid because it did not need saying: Plancus could fill in the blanks even if we cannot. While no ties among the Antistii, Atei Capitones, and Munatii Planci are on record, they may have been friends, perhaps connected through the Plautii, whose ties with Plancus' family have already been noted; perhaps Cicero himself was the connector; he is on record as *necessarius* and *familiaris* with Plancus and his brother, with Capito, and with A. Plautius.

The Atei Capitones were in the Aniensis tribe, as were the Plautii Silvani. Among the places where this tribe is found is the area around Trebula Suffenas in the upper Anio valley.⁵² This may be the ancestral home for both families. In 44 C. Capito was land commissioner with L. Plautius Plancus – brother by birth of our Plancus, praetor-designate for 43, adopted by a Plautius, and friend of Cicero. We do not know which Plautius adopted this Plancus, but we have already noted possible ties between the Plautii Silvani and Munatii Planci. If the A. Plautius to whom Antistius fled in Bithynia in 48 is to be identified with the A. Plautius praetor in 51 and a Silvanus,⁵³ this may be the reason why Cicero's account in the letter of 46 is so detailed. Why should Cicero have told Plancus that T. Antistius fled to A. Plautius in Bithynia when Plancus is asked to protect Antistius' legacy to his *propinquus* Capito?

Perhaps Cicero was alluding to someone who was a close friend of himself and Plancus and one whose kinsmen had adopted Plancus' brother. Cicero counted on Plancus' sense of *officium*, even *obsequium*, by arguing, in effect, "you may not have known Antistius, but he was *necessarius* to Plautius whose own kin adopted your brother." Plancus would then emphasize these ties in his efforts to persuade Caesar to be favorable to Capito.

T. Antistius is enigmatic, yet he is at the very center of the puzzle. Cicero tells us the little we know of him: *propinquus* of Plautius, wealthy, and dead at an early age (quaestor in 50, so in his early 30s). It is easy to sympathize with his personal tragedy, more difficult to make him an historical figure. The *gens Antistia* had two major branches: the Veteres and the Regini.⁵⁴ The prominent Antistii mostly have as *praenomina* Caius and Lucius, which leaves a few members of the *gens* unattached. One unanchored Antistius is our Titus, whose *cognomen* is not given. He may have had relatives on both sides of the

civil war. Another is C. Antistius Reginus, who disappears after service as a legate under Caesar from 51 to 49.⁵⁵ L. Antistius Reginus was tribune in 56 and initiated a prosecution of Caesar, which failed.⁵⁶

In 61–60 T. Antistius had served as quaestor under Caesar. Roman society regarded it as a severe breach of etiquette for an ex-quaestor to attack his former superior officer, so Vetus and his relatives might have feared Caesar's wrath. Caesar himself had been quaestor under a (C.?) Antistius Vetus in Further Spain in 69 and appointed this man's son his own proquaestor in 45–43. T. Antistius could be related to either Caesar's Reginus or the anti-Caesarian tribune of 56, and thus a Vetus. If a Vetus, he was in the Aemilian tribe, which is found in the area of Formiae-Caieta. This might provide the background for the *necessitudo* between him and the Pompeian governor of Bithynia-Pontus in 49–48, A. Plautius.

Summary: assembling the conjectures

This chapter has proposed to relocate the homeland of the Munatii Planci from Tibur to Formiae-Caieta. The Planci were wealthy, were equestrian in standing, and may have had a villa near Tivoli from around 100. Plancus' father was a senator and legate in the early 80s. This shift of *origo* provides a possible explanation for the closeness between Cicero and Plancus, or as Cicero put it, *necessitudo* for Plancus' *domus*. Perhaps as early as the 170s M. Aemilius Lepidus, head of one of the leading families at Rome, became a patron of the Munatii, and this tie of clientship endured for generations. Another associated family was the Plautii Silvani, one of whom adopted Plancus' younger brother. Other families of the region, Antistii and Capitones, may also have been associated with the Munatii Planci, though these ties were not as close as those with the Aemilii Lepidi and Plautii Silvani.

Notes

- 1 See generally Wiseman 1971 *passim* and esp. Appendix 2. Cicero's family is an exception, as he reveals bits about his family in various writings: see Mitchell 1979, 2–9.
- 2 See the convenient guidebook by Cavaliere and Gizzi 1998. After extensive clearance and repairs, the temple has recently been opened to the public. The substructures have had a colorful history, being used as an armaments factory, powder magazine, cannon foundry, woolen mill, and a papermill. Tibur's ties to Hercules and Plancus reappear several times in this study. Augustus administered justice here on occasion: Suet., *Aug.* 72.2; Gellius, *NA* 19.5.4; Appian, 5.24.
- 3 *Ode* 1.7 is analyzed in Chapter 7. Osgood 2006, 278 is among the majority of historians who favor Tibur as Plancus' home. On the unreliability of the late commentators, observe Syme 1986, 119: "When facts of history are in question, the scholiasts betray gross ignorance and

- confident imbecilities.” *ILS* 5231 for a C. Munatius T.f. at Tibur in the first century BC, perhaps descended from the senator C. Munatius of 173 (later) and related to the C. Munatius of *Fam.* 13.60 = SB 55. Modern Tivoli wants to claim Plancus as a native son, as there is a Via Planco in the town.
- 4 Cf. Syme 1958, Preface, v on the necessity of “conjecture,” without which “history is not worth writing, for it does not become intelligible.”
 - 5 Jullien 1892, 9–10; Hanslik, *RE* 16.551; and Walser 1957, 13 all work back from the consulship at age 42. Sumner 1971, 359–60 points out that Plancus was a legate in 54, therefore in the Senate and presumably quaestor by 55, and thus born by 86.
 - 6 For Tibur and Plancus, see Taylor 1960, 236; his family’s citizenship preceded the enfranchisement of Tibur by at least three generations, a century or so, and accordingly she doubts whether he was in Tibur’s tribe, the Camilia; see further 41–4 and 111 for enfranchisement of the town in 90–89. Syme, *RP* 1.585, cites *IGR* 4.292 (“L. Munatius L.f. Cam. Tertius”) as evidence that the family was from Tibur. For the town’s status before the Social War, see Sherwin-White 1973, 30–5. If Tibur had been a Latin town, its magistrates would have acquired Roman citizenship by holding local office; cf. Taylor, 18–19, 108–11, 280–81; and 1949, 113–18. I argue later that the family tribe was the Aemilia.
 - 7 Mapping epigraphically-attested Munatii would prove little: too many inscriptions are not datable, and if they come from a later age are irrelevant for the third to second centuries BC. Inscriptions are scattered thinly around Italy but have a preponderance in southern Latium and Campania. Cf. *ILS* 4726, 6445, 6459; *CIL* 10 p. 1047 for slaves and freedpersons. *ILS* 2029, 5316, 5372, 9646 a-c, North Italy; *ILLRP* 1011, Agrigentum on Sicily.
 - 8 For Munatius Rufus, disciple of Cato, see Geiger 1979, 48–72. *B.Alex.* 52 and *B. Hisp.* 19: (L.) Munatius (Plancus? Rufus?) resident at Corduba: the same person?
 - 9 *ILLRP* 359–60.
 - 10 For Plancus as “flatfoot”: Pliny, *NH* 11.254; Macrobi., *Sat.* 1.6.24–5. Moles 2002, 102 derives the *cognomen* from *plango*. We return to Moles’ analysis of Horace, *Ode* 1.7 and also 3.14 in Chapter 7.
 - 11 Livy 8.14.10 (in 338) and 38.56.7–9 (in 189); see Taylor 1960, 18, 93, 95 and 307.
 - 12 Beneventum: *ILLRP* 554 (L. Munat[iu[s]]). Jullien 1892, 139 thinks this quaestor might be Plancus’ son, who became consul in AD 13, but Degrassi’s date is shortly after the colonial foundation, and the consul of AD 13 was probably Plancus’ grandson. A contemporary Munatius was quaestor at the Latin colony of Firmum: *ILLRP* 593. See Salmon 1969, 41, 55–6, and 63–54; and 1967, 22, 81, 287–89 and 303.
 - 13 App. *Mith.* 34; *ILS* 8961 a-b = *ILLRP* 359–60. with Degrassi’s commentary for the Delian trader. Wiseman 1971, 241; Münzer, *RE* “Munatius no. 5. *MRR* 3.146 tentatively accepts the legate him as a Plancus. Gruen 1974, 185 identifies the legate as Plancus’ father.
 - 14 A variant to Figure 2.3 makes the legate (Plancus’ father) and the Delian honoree sons of brothers, thus cousins: L. Plancus (born c. 175/4) had two sons, Lucius who was born ca. 145/4 and became father of the legate, and Caius who was born later and became the father of the Delian honoree.
 - 15 Münzer, *RE* “Munatius” no. 26. Val. Max. 6.8.5 has C. Plotius (variant on Plautius) Plancus, so Caius may have been his *praenomen* at birth: it was common among the Munatii, second to Lucius. Moneyer in 47 struck coins giving his name as L. Plautius Plancus (sometimes omitting the “s”): see Crawford 1974, 478 no 453 and pl. liii no. 23 = *BMCR* 4008f. These denarii are the earliest references to him and indicate the adoption had already occurred. Münzer wrongly cites Caes., *BC* 3.19.6–7; the text there reads M. Plotius.

- Sumner 1971, 366 n. 55 thinks he was born about 83. Cicero generally calls him Plotius, not Plautius. The adoption into the Plautii is considered later.
- 16 Vell. 2.83.2: Plancus was Titius' *avunculus*. Titius was responsible for the capture and execution of Sextus Pompeius in 35 and commanded part of Octavian's forces at Actium in 31.
- 17 Asconius 32C. See Appendix 2. "Titus" appears infrequently among the Munatii and never among the Planci.
- 18 See Shatzman 1975, 50–4 and 386–87; Hopkins 1983, 69–98; Brunt 1986.
- 19 The total lack of information about a wife or wives is highly regrettable. Drumann-Groebe, *Geschichte Roms* (Leipzig, 2nd ed. 1899–1929) 4.227–28 postulates a second marriage for Plancus. Humbert 1972, 86: "divorce ou remariage?"; Treggiari 1991, 502 cites Humbert. The basis for this hypothesis is the assumption that L. Plancus (cos. AD 13) and his sister Munatia Plancina are Plancus' children, possibly by a second and younger wife. I regard them as his grandchildren: see the Epilogue.
- 20 *Att.* 1.4.3 = SB 9. This villa and that at Tusculum were put up for sale when Cicero went into exile and were plundered and burned: *post Red. in Sen.* 18; *de Domo* 62; *in Pis.* 26; *de Leg.* 2.42; Plut., *Cicero* 33.1. Cicero received compensation of 250,000 sesterces for the *Formianum* and 500,000 for the *Tusculanum* in 57: *Att.* 4.2.2–5 = SB 74; *Fam.* 1.9.4 = SB 20; cf. 2.5 = SB 9.
- 21 Suet., *Rel.* 289 Roth, For Munatius Rufus, disciple of Cato, see Geiger 1979, 48–72. *B.Alex.* 52 and *B. Hisp.* 19: (L.) Munatius (Plancus) resident at Corduba: the same person?
- 22 *Fam.* 13.29 = SB 282, in early 46. Cicero claims that the youthful Plancus looked to Cicero for all manner of advice. In 10.1.2 = 340, September 44, Cicero stresses "the steadfast and indeed increasing affection I have entertained for you ever since you were a boy." Even though we must allow that Cicero's primary purpose was to win Plancus over to his side against Antony, it remains true that there was clearly some sort of real friendship between them.
- 23 Macrobi., *Sat.* 2.2.6, discussed in Chapter 1.
- 24 *Fam.* 13.29.1 and 5 = SB 282 (in 46); 10.1.2–3 = SB 340; 10.3.2 = SB 355; and 10.5.1 = SB 359. See chaps. 4–5.
- 25 See Shackleton Bailey 1971, 270; Syme 1964b, 227; R. Y. Tyrell and L. C. Purser, *The Correspondence of Cicero* (Dublin, 1904–33) 6.lxx (following a strong attack on Plancus); G. Boissier (n.d.), 246; cf. 359, wrongly implying that Cicero's friendship with Plancus came only after Pharsalus in 48; Julien 1892, 13.
- 26 *Fam.* 10.4.1 = SB 358; 10.7.1 = SB 372; 10.9 = SB 379; 10.13.1 = SB 382; 10.21a = SB 382; 10.23.7 = SB 414; and 10.24.1 and 7 = SB 428.
- 27 Rowland 1969–70, 194: he finds Cicero's ties with the Planci particularly illustrative of *necessitudo* and adds that they are typical of Cicero's *necessarii* in being "from the municipalities of Italy and, if active in Roman politics, from new families." I see no reason, however, to accept Rowland's argument that Plancus did not feel himself Cicero's *necessarius*.
- 28 *Fam.* 16.16A.3 = SB 407. Written July 4 or 5, 44, this letter is thus earlier than the series with our Plancus, which starts in September.
- 29 *Fam.* 10.21A and 17 = SB 392, 398.
- 30 *Fam.* 10.3.2 = SB 355. See Saller 1984, 336–55; *domus* on 342–49 and this letter in n. 39. The suggested ties by marriage are mine, not Saller's.
- 31 On the Aelii Lamiae: Treggiari 1973; D'Arms 1981, 42; Wiseman 1971, 197, 202. Sestius: *pro*

- Sestio* 29, “*summa familiaritas*” with the father of the aedile of 45; *ad Att.* 15.27 and 29 = SB 406, 408 (July, 44). Caelius Rufus: *pro Caelio* 73. Valerii: *Brutus* 169 and *de Or.* 3.43.
- 32 Cic., *de Legibus* 2.3.
- 33 Livy 42.4.4. For the land commission, see Toynbee 1965, 2.200, 202, 272; table V on 656, and map 1 inserted in the back of vol. 2. Also, Brunt 1971, 193. For Lepidus, see Scullard 1973; Astin 1967, 35–7. See later.
- 34 Colonies: Livy 39.55.7–8 with Salmon 1969, 106–08. See Badian 1958, 276, who points to Lepidus’ clientele in Cisalpine. Much of this area is named for him, Emilia; and the little market town he established as Forum Lepidi is now Forlì.
- 35 Livy 35.10.11–12 and 48.51.2. For his wealth, see Shatzman 1975, 242, cf. 148–49; D’Arms 1981, 36; Castagnoli in D’Arms and E. C. Kopff, 1980, 35–9; and D’Arms 1970, 5–6, adding that since *prandia* in Livy 40.51.2 “implies a dwelling house as well as land, it is a likely hypothesis that Lepidus spent some time in residence on the coast of Latium before his death in 153/152.”
- 36 For the wealth derived from agriculture and shipping of Tarracina and the construction of the great temple there, see Coarelli’s essay in M. Cebeillac-Gervasoni 1983, 217–49.
- 37 See generally Wiseman 1971; Mitchell 1974. Wiseman (30–2) and Mitchell (39, 48–9) emphasize how the old elite Roman families co-opted wealthy notables as Rome extended citizenship. Many of the new men came from the region close to Rome, best-suited for developing contacts. See also Shatzman 1975, 147–58; D’Arms 1981 *passim*; and Hopkins 1983, 31–45. For the wide range of meaning of *amicitia* see Brunt 1989, 353–81.
- 38 For Paullus’ property at Caieta, see *Att.* 14.7.1 and 8.1 = SB 361–62; *MRR* 3.9; Shackleton Bailey 1988, 11–12. For Lepidus’ property at Formiae, see *Att.* 7.23.1 = SB 147; *Phil.* 13.16–17 and 49 for his wealth. When deposed as triumvir in 36 he was confined to Circeii, presumably on family lands: Suet., *Aug.* 16.4 and Vell. 2.80.4.
- 39 The censorship of 22 is discussed in Chapter 8. Plancus’ co-censor was Paullus Aemilius Lepidus, whose first wife was Sempronia, sister of the L. Sempronius Atratinus, who had been Lepidus’ colleague as suffect consul in 34: see Syme 1986, 109 and introductory point 3 to his table V. Atratinus’ tomb was near Plancus, and is a landmark in downtown Gaeta. If it was constructed on ancestral property, as I argue Plancus’ was, then the Atratinii may also have been clients of the Aemilii Lepidi.
- 40 For enfranchisement, see the earlier note 6. Brunt 1971, 84–6, 345–50: since 338 Tibur had had *commercium* which enabled Romans to “acquire land in Latin territory, convenient from its contiguity to the capital.” If we accept the incidental comments in the *de Oratore* (dramatic date of 91), Roman senators commonly had villas around Tibur at this time (2.224, 263). Cf. Shatzman 1975, 266 for a senator going into exile at Tibur in 173, “where he possibly had property” (Livy 43.2).
- 41 See Giglioni 1977 for the wealth of the temples of Latium, that of Hercules on 59–67; 62–3. for senators; and 72–6 for ties between temples and businessmen. D’Arms 1981, 29, 65 follows Giglioni. Even more valuable is the study by Coarelli 1984: he associates the burst of construction, notably at these temples, with the wealth coming into Italy from around the Mediterranean and controlled by men from Latium and Campania; see 221–32 for Tibur. Convenient descriptions of the temple are by Boethius in Boethius and Ward-Perkins 1976, 132–35; and Coarelli 1982, 74–5.
- 42 There is no good reason to believe that historical accuracy lies behind the so-called “villa of Plancus” near Tibur. See Mari, *Tibur IV* pp. 129–34; discussed in the Epilogue.
- 43 See Taylor 1956, 9–30; summarized in 1959, 243–44. Her stemma is corrected by Wiseman,

- 1971, 251–52, followed by Gruen 1974, 172. For Ciciliano: Coarelli 1982, 117–19. As son of an *eques*, the praetor of 51 (*pro Plancio* 17) is not the son of the legate of 90 as Taylor had argued. Slaves of A. and M. Plautius at Minturnae: *ILLRP* 724, 729, 735, 743–44. Plotii at Delos: *ILLRP* 748, also 926 (M. Plautius A. M. L(ibertus) Trasea; 107 add for a slave of L. Plautius, a *magister* making a dedication to Fortuna Primigenia, appropriate for merchants. The ties between the praetor of 51 and Plancus emerge later.
- 44 M. Plautius Silvanus (pr. AD 24) was son of the man who built the mausoleum at Ponte Lucano; the adopted son is Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus (suff. AD 45, 74), born son of L. Aelius Lamia (cos. AD 3). See Syme 1986, 52 with note 24; *ILS* 986; Treggiari 1973. Aelii Lamiae, Plautii Silvani, Atei Capitones, and Antistii Veteres were of similar social background to the Planci, and Cicero was on good terms with members of all of these *gentes*.
- 45 *Pro Balbo* 53. Grandsons: *pro Caelio* 24. Praetor: Caes., *BC* 3.5.3 and 3.26–7; *Att.* 8.12A.4 = SB 162A. Proscriptions: App. 4.40. Attack on Plancus: Vell. 2.83.2. For Coponii or Cauponii at Tibur: *ILS* 3700, 6243 = *CIL* 14.3528, 3540; cf. 3740. A Coponius was legate under Crassus at Carrhae: Plut., *Crassus* 27.7. Given the casualties there, the legate may have been Titus, leaving Caius to attack Plancus in 32 – Velleius says Plancus’ critic was of praetorian rank, i.e., the praetor of 49. See also Gruen 1974, 73, 174 (identifying the praetor with the legate); 301–02, 308 n. 183. See Giuliani 1966, 79–80 for the supposed villa of the Coponii outside Tibur, a site once known as Covone.
- 46 For the Menenia tribe, see Taylor 1960, 43–4, 111, 273 and the map preceding Chapter 5 (“Menenia?”) near Tibur. Villas: Mari, *Tibur* (Italia Romana IV, part 3), 19, 22, 145–51; Carducci 1940, 87, 89; and Coarelli, *Lazio* 101. The consul of 58 who was Caesar’s father-in-law, L. Piso Caesoninus, may have had property at Tibur, if *CIL* 12.818 refers to him: Shatzman 1975, 29, 214–17. Caesoninus, however, belongs to a different branch of the *gens* from the consul of 7; the Lucius and Caius Pisones descend from the praetor of 211, whereas the Cnaei Pisones derive from the consul of 139: see Syme 1986, 329–30 and tables XVII and XXV. See the Epilogue.
- 47 Some scholars have adopted too rigid an approach, for example, Scullard 1973 and Gruen 1968, though his 1974 is more flexible. Brunt (1989), however, almost depoliticizes friendship and clientship. For a balanced assessment, see Broughton, *ANRW* 1.250–65; he accepts Gelzer’s definition of *nobilitas* as the consular families (252). And as Broughton points out, the great generals upset many older groupings by using their immense personal powers.
- 48 For absence of attachment: Rawson 1976, esp. 88–9. Shatzman 1975 on the Cicerones and Aemilii. On 329 he points out that “inscriptions can sometimes help us to locate senatorial property. Thus, sepulchral inscriptions normally indicate that the buried, or their families, owned property in that area.” But he does not associate tombs specifically with ancestral property. Suet., *Aug.* 98.5–100.1 and *Vesp.* 1.2–2.1, 24.
- 49 *Fam.* 13.29 = SB 282. Shackleton Bailey dates it only to early 46, but I prefer a date after Thapsus (April 6 in the pre-Julian calendar) but before Caesar’s return to Rome on July 25. The military situation is imprecise (“*hoc ipso in bello*”, 7), but the tone reveals Cicero’s domination, and Cicero would not have written had Caesar lost. For this type of letter, see Cotton 1985.
- 50 See *MRR* 2.236; Gruen 1974, 342, 484; *de Div.* 1.29 for his criticism of Caesar’s departure from Rome against the omens and subsequent expulsion from the Senate.
- 51 See Wiseman 1971, 215 and *PIR*²A1279. The legacy is fifteen times the minimum for senatorial rank and may have enabled him to further his career.

- 52 *Fam.* 8.8.5 = SB 84, from Caelius, includes a copy of a decree of the Senate of September 51 in which appears L. Ateius L.f. Ani[ensis tribus]; *pro Plancio* 54 for the Plautii in the Aniensis, see Taylor 1960, 243f. (Plautii) and 194 (Atei), and the next note.
- 53 Commission: *Att.* 14.16 with the appended A-F = SB 407; discussed in Chapter 3. In the Commentary to 407C (6.277), to Capito, Shackleton Bailey says Cicero “had written to Plancus on behalf of a relative of Capito’s,” citing *Fam.* 13.29 = SB 282: this confuses L. Munatius Plancus, recipient of no. 282, with his brother, L. Plotius Plancus, referred to at 407C.
- 54 Gruen 1974, 200–01; Badian 1974. A decree of the Senate of 129 has two L. Antistii in the Senate. One is *C.f. Men(enia tribu)*; the other’s filiation is lost and tribe is not clear because of a corrupt manuscript. Taylor 1960, 19–20 restored it to read Sabina; Badian proposed Aemilia, “which is known to have been the tribe of the Antistii Veteres.” Cf. *CIL* 14.2849. Badian also suggested that either the senator or his son dropped a previous *cognomen* and adopted Vetus. For the Regini of Regium Lepidum, see Taylor, 90, 180–81, 191; Badian, 151.
- 55 See *MRR* ad loc; cf. 3.18, citing *Att.* 10.12.1 = SB 203 for 49 (the text of *MRR* should read 10.12, not 10.21).
- 56 See Badian 1969 in Evans (1974) on Suet., *DJ* 23: a Vetus; cf. 1974, pp. 149ff. There was no L. Antistius tribune in 58, and thus the reference in *MRR* 2. 295 should be deleted, as noted at *MRR* 3.38.

3 Plancus the Caesarian, 54–44

From legate to consul designate

By his thirtieth year Plancus had taken the first steps on the *cursus honorum* and may well have started a family. On grounds of chronological probability, one would expect him to have married by this time, and he may have had a son by 55, though neither wife nor child is certain. His only attested descendants are the siblings L. Plancus (consul AD 13) and Munatia Plancina, who were born 25–20; Plancus would have been sixty to sixty-five by this time, rather old to be their father. We should posit an intervening generation, a boy born ca. 55 who became the father of the consul and his sister. From 54 onward for the next several years Plancus was away from Rome in Gaul and then in the civil war, so birth of a son might be by 55 and marriage a year or so earlier.

He was probably quaestor and thus a senator in 55, as he became a legate under Caesar in 54.¹ The quaestorship may be the only office to which Plancus was ever elected in the traditional manner. Caesar evidently appointed him praetor and a member of the college of urban prefects in 45, made him proconsul of Gallia Comata for 44–43, and designated him for the consulship of 42; Augustus picked him for censor in 22. Caution is demanded. Caesar rarely mentions his officers' arrivals and departures, and our knowledge of his staff is very incomplete: at no time can we make a complete list of Caesar's legates. Commanders frequently selected legates more for their political connections than their military experience, but as relatively few members of the old aristocracy served with him, he selected most legates from the back benches of the Senate and from equestrians and local notables.² Plancus' social background was probably similar to that of A. Hirtius, T. Labienus, Q. Titurius Sabinus, L. Aurunculeius Cotta, and the *decoctor Formianus* ("Formian bankrupt") Mamurra (*praefectus fabrum*, not a legate and known from

Catullus).³ An examination of the setting and relationship between Caesar and Cicero, however, makes it highly likely that Plancus was appointed legate under Caesar precisely in 54. His decision to join Caesar was momentous, as it was the springboard to a career that took him to the highest offices of the *Res Publica* and the far reaches of the empire for over thirty years.

Military service, the backing of one's commander, the acquisition of money, and often competence in oratory and the courts generally preceded election to the quaestorship and after the Sullan reform of 81 automatic entry into the Senate.⁴ If Plancus' father had served as a legate in 87, then the family was already senatorial; if the Munatii attested in various commercial activities were close relatives, the family had the wealth required to fund a career in politics. But he needed a sponsor whose influence opened closed doors and recruited votes. A combination of luck, contacts, and the political and military situation lay behind Plancus' initial decisions to head off to Gaul. Luck occurred first, as he had the good fortune to have held the quaestorship soon after Caesar got his *imperium* extended for five years, increased his army to eight legions, and won authorization from the Senate to pay for them and the appointment of ten legates.⁵ Plancus, in other words, was eligible for a legateship just as more were opening up. Commanders had much freedom in selecting their legates, and senatorial confirmation was routine. Caesar expected his legates to be loyal, competent, and obedient to his orders; proven military experience demonstrating promise was doubtless an advantage but was not a prerequisite.⁶ Political considerations were a major consideration, as generals often chose as legates political allies or persons whom they sought to make allies.⁷ Thus P. Crassus was the son of Caesar's triumviral colleague, and when Cicero turned down the offer of a legateship Caesar invited him to make recommendations – a back-door way of at least neutralizing Cicero's steady opposition to the triumvirate. Some saw in legateships the opportunity to advance to higher office and win *gloria*. Others wanted to amass fortunes without exposing themselves to dangers or hardship. It is worth inquiring why Caesar selected Plancus, that is to say, how did this aspiring man of municipal origins catch the eye of the triumviral proconsul of Gaul?

As with so much else pertaining to Plancus, the sources provide clues but not certainty. There are no known contacts between the Munatii Planci and Julii Caesares, no reason to believe that he had ever met Plancus. Cicero certainly forwarded two names to Caesar in 54: his younger brother Quintus Cicero and a friend C. Trebatius Testa. The circumstances surrounding these appointments can be traced through Cicero's correspondence. Letters and other bits of information permit the inference that he forwarded a third candidate as well, Plancus.

Caesar's position in Gaul was secure for the time being, as an attempt to

prosecute him in early 56 had failed and the triumvirs had renewed their uneasy partnership at Luca. They had agreed that Cicero should be forced into compliance with their wishes. Humiliated, Cicero spoke on behalf of the triumvirs in *de Provinciis Consularibus* of June or July and defended Caesar's agent L. Cornelius Balbus in August or September.⁸ In 55 the consuls Pompey and Crassus secured the five-year extension of Caesar's governorship of Cisalpine and Farther Gaul and Illyricum and senatorial agreement to pay for his newly enrolled legions and appoint ten new legates.

While his *imperium* was safe for the next quinquennium, Caesar had to move carefully and think into the future. The triumvirs influenced, but did not control, politics at Rome. They failed to block the election of two opponents to the consulship of 54, Claudius Pulcher and Domitius Ahenobarbus whose affiliation was with his brother-in-law Cato and the other steadfast enemies of the triumvirs.⁹ Ahenobarbus was a vigorous and determined enemy of Caesar until his death at Pharsalus in 48. Vociferous enemies necessitated vociferous allies, so Caesar eased up on Cicero and urged him to adopt a friendly neutrality – a policy he retained for the rest of his life. As in 59/58, Cicero certainly could have secured a sinecure with Caesar far from the dangers of the war zone by merely asking for a legateship.¹⁰ Knowing that Cicero was not inclined to absent himself from political life at Rome – which would have uncomfortably resembled the exile in Macedonia in 58/57 – or to undergo the discomforts of military service in the wilds of Gaul when he was about to turn fifty years of age, Caesar invited him to nominate friends. Besides, in early 54 the triumvir Crassus departed to Syria and Caesar had to worry about the prospect that Pompey, devious and unreliable, might change course and seek to undermine his command in Gaul and plans for his career afterward. The death in 54 of Caesar's daughter Julia, married to Pompey since 59, further weakened the bond between the two triumvirs. As part of his effort to stay on good terms with Cicero, this same year Caesar loaned Cicero some 800,000 sesterces. He never pressed for repayment, and the interest is estimated to have been only 1 percent.¹¹ In the long run it was Cicero who wanted to repay the loan so as to be free of any moral obligation, distressingly similar to the subordinate status of a client, to Caesar. Nor was Cicero the only senator in debt – in more ways than one – to Caesar. Generous loans and easy repayment schedules were one of his favorite tactics, as they were of Crassus. Oratorical support was well worth having, and Cicero duly defended triumviral allies in 54: P. Vatinius, C. Messius, Cn. Plancius, A. Gabinius, C. Rabirius Postumus, and M. Aemilius Scaurus.

Quintus Cicero was the same age as Caesar, had been praetor with him in 62, governor of Asia in 61–60, and a legate under Pompey in 57–56; he is a good example of a rather senior legate with considerable military experience,

as he was forty-six when he went to Gaul in February 54. The Cicero brothers had known Caesar for years, so Caesar may have taken Quintus in part out of friendship with him as well as with Marcus. Quintus at the least intended to accumulate a fortune, and he may well have hoped to acquire *gloria* and the backing of Caesar for a belated run at the consulship.¹² Pompey had used his tremendous political clout (*auctoritas*) to get consulships for his legates from the eastern campaigns in 61–60, so surely, Quintus must have reasoned, Caesar could do the same. The conspicuously unmilitary Trebatius Testa, on the other hand, signed on with Caesar to fill his pockets – as full, as easily (preferably without incurring danger or discomfort), and as quickly as possible.¹³ Yet Caesar accepted him, used him as a legal expert, and must have had a good reason for doing so: it was part of his policy to attract Cicero's friends and gradually the great orator himself. When Caesar invited Cicero to nominate candidates for consideration and helped Cicero help his friends financially and politically, Caesar placed Cicero under obligation and picked up some additional clients for himself.¹⁴

An invitation for Cicero to nominate legates allowed him to believe that he had real influence. Cicero probably used army couriers some of the time when writing to persons with Caesar and must have written cautiously: Caesar or his agents might read the letters before they got to their addressees. A letter to Atticus in late November indicates that at that moment Cicero felt quite warmly toward Caesar, who had recently commended Quintus Cicero. Within a year the Cicero brothers were cooling off and backing away, in part, perhaps, because the plans for a consulship for Quintus had collapsed. The collection of Ciceronian letters in 54 contains seven from Cicero to Trebatius and fourteen to Quintus, but none from either of them to Cicero in Rome and none from Cicero to anyone else in Gaul. Testa and Quintus wrote to Cicero, but these letters have not survived and the exchange with Quintus ends in December. If we had more of Cicero's correspondence, we would probably have learned of other changes on Caesar's staff. Plancus presumably corresponded with a number of people, but nothing survives and there are no allusions in the exchange of 46 and 44–43 to anything from the earlier period.¹⁵

Quintus left for Gaul in time to be on hand when the campaigning season opened in spring. In April 54 Cicero recommended Testa for a position with Caesar and recalled the latter's invitation to forward additional candidates. In September Cicero reported that he had been invited to recommend tribunes to Caesar, has sent condolences to him on the death of Julia, and has received another letter from him. Was Plancus in this latter batch of legates, or had he received his appointment with Quintus and traveled with him so as to arrive in Gaul for the year's warfare? On balance, the latter seems preferable, as this would give him some months with the army and thus time to demonstrate

competence before being given the independent assignment discussed later. And as already noted, a letter to Atticus in late November shows Cicero's pleasure that Caesar has praised Quintus.¹⁶ By March 53 Trebatius was coming under Caesar's spell, as did so many others who served with him – such as Plancus. It is striking that when the civil war opened in early 49, only Labienus and Q. Cicero among his legates abandoned Caesar for the Republican or Pompeian forces.

Two other officers first appear on Caesar's staff in 54, though it is unknown how they came to be there or whether this was their first year with him. C. Fabius and C. Trebonius served as legates from 54 for the next several years. Fabius disappears in 49, but Trebonius prospered: urban praetor in 48, governor of Farther Spain in 47–46, and suffect consul the last three months of 45. So far, he is an excellent case study in how one could profit and advance politically by service with Caesar, a parallel to Plancus. Then came his personal crisis of conscience, as he and several other previously loyal Caesarians, conspicuously M. and Dec. Brutus and C. Cassius, switched sides and joined the assassins by early 44. In sum, Caesar may have picked up five new legates in 54: Q. Cicero, Testa, Plancus, Fabius, and Trebonius. The first two certainly, and in my opinion the third as well, owed this remarkable piece of good fortune to Caesar's readiness to accept Cicero's recommendations. Plancus' and Testa's adherence in no way damaged their friendship with Cicero.¹⁷

Plancus' motivation in joining Caesar appears to have been more political than pecuniary. Had Caesar not mentioned Plancus' role in the campaign of 54, described in the fifth book of the *Gallic War Commentaries*, nobody now would realize that Plancus was on his staff in the late 50s. That Plancus profited financially is a safe guess, but we have no specific information, and he doubtless made a great deal more money when governor of Gallia Comata in 44–43 and triumphed over the Raeti. The frieze on the mausoleum at Caieta is made up of Gallic shields and weapons, and the epitaph there boasts that he rebuilt the Temple of Saturn in the Forum from spoils of war. Perhaps he also used some of the proceeds from his campaigns in Gaul to acquire or build a villa near Tivoli (or extensively remodel one already in the family) and make it his favored place of retreat, as Horace pictures in *Ode* 1.7.

Discouragingly little is recorded about Plancus' activities and responsibilities under Caesar: one incident in Gaul and then another in Africa nearly five years later. The *Bellum Gallicum* says nothing of Caesar's nonmilitary activities (such as his administration of justice through assizes in the winter months) or political maneuverings, and through its steady employment of third-person narrative confines itself almost exclusively to Caesar's actions as commander. The fifth book of the *Commentaries* covers the year 54, a portion of it devoted to a description of the second invasion of

Britain. Plancus may have accompanied the half of the army which crossed the Channel, but there is no proof.¹⁸ Thereafter the Romans were fully occupied in crushing revolts which erupted after the legions dispersed into widely separated winter quarters. Plancus moved a legion from the territory of the Belgae southwest to that of the Carnutes, around modern Chartres and Orleans, arrested the leaders of an incipient uprising, and sent them to Caesar. The land of the Carnutes was a hotbed of Druid activity, and these vehemently anti-Roman priests may have helped instigate the threatened revolt. One wonders if Plancus passed on to Caesar some of the information about the Druids which Caesar included in his description of Gallic customs. The Carnutes wavered but surrendered early in 53; presumably Plancus was still in charge of the operations against them and regional security.¹⁹

His duties and whereabouts until early 49 are not on record, but it seems safe to assume he remained with Caesar in some capacity. The Carnutes' surrender proved temporary, as they began the great revolt of 52 with a massacre of Roman traders at Cenabum (Orleans) (7.2). Plancus must have been at the great siege of Alesia, as Caesar pulled together his entire army for this final, decisive battle. A winter campaign in 52–51 put down another revolt (8.4–6, 28, 31). A French historian has conjectured that Plancus' main duty in the late 50s was to keep an eye on Labienus whom Caesar allegedly already suspected of disloyalty.²⁰ This is most improbable, as Labienus' defection in 49 was evidently sudden and unexpected. There is no sign of Plancus in the detailed description of the legionary distribution for the winter of 52–51, and he remains out of sight to us until 49. If he remained in Gaul with Caesar, as seems likely, we can assume his commander was satisfied with his performance.

As the 50s drew to a close, Plancus must have given thought to what he should do in the event of civil war. His preference presumably was for Caesar to return to Rome in 50 or early 49, secure a second consulship to protect himself from judicial prosecution, and then do as Pompey had done in 62: see to it that his chief legates became consuls. In this way Plancus and men such as C. Fabius, C. Caninius Rebilus, and T. Sextius would enjoy careers similar to those of M. Pupius Piso and L. Afranius, Pompeian legates in the pirate and eastern wars who attained consulships in 61 and 60. If he had been with Caesar since 54, he must have acquired a well-grounded appreciation of the commander's superb abilities on the battlefield and calculated that in the event of open war, Caesar's genius would find a way to victory. And with victory would come Plancus' best chance to reach high political office.

His subsequent career reveals him a shrewd judge of shifting winds of political and military fortunes, and like so many others he probably thought that there were no absolute rights and wrongs in the political struggle. The

senior consular and philosophically inclined Cicero thought about the *honestum*, morally proper course of action. There is no sign that Plancus put the issue in these terms.²¹ Most of the other legates thought along the same lines: Caesarian patronage, the votes of demobilized soldiers, and Gallic gold would be consequences of their loyalty. Only Quintus Cicero and Labienus defected to the Republicans in 49.²² Labienus resented not being designated for the consulship, and he was from the Pompeian homeland of Picenum. Quintus was presumably at least in part influenced by his older brother. Those who defected later did so because they felt Caesar had become monarchical and authoritarian, but this was not primary in the winter of 50–49.

Plancus' attitude toward the politicians and events in Rome in the late 50s is unknown. Caesar's officers belonged to the literate class and certainly exchanged messages with friends in Rome,²³ so he was relatively well informed. The basic problem is that we have no idea of the persons with whom he may have corresponded or what his thoughts were. Only the result is known. In early 49 he opted to stay with Caesar, who in his judgment represented Roman traditions, as much as did the narrow senatorial oligarchy which declared him a rebel. The Caesar of late 50 to early 49 was not the Caesar of five years later, as the rapidly changing political situation led him to become increasingly autocratic. Plancus' assessment of him at the end of the Gallic War may have altered by the conclusion of the Civil War in 45. If so, he was not alone.

The rush of events in the last month of 50 and first weeks of 49 threw Rome into a civil war that almost nobody wanted. Caesar's friends and supporters in Rome circulated his "reasonable" proposals for a negotiated settlement. In 50 Gallic gold converted the tribune C. Curio from an opponent to an active ally and the consul L. Paullus to a friendly neutral. In early December Curio sponsored a motion that Caesar and Pompey should disarm simultaneously, and the Senate passed it 370–322. Speaking for the clique of unalterable optimates, the other consul C. Claudius Marcellus blocked it. Although lacking authorization to do so, Marcellus commissioned Pompey to take command of the state's troops. At the start of January, the new consul L. Cornelius Lentulus blocked the efforts of the "Caesarian" tribune M. Antonius to read Caesar's latest proposals and ran him out of Rome, to Ravenna on the southern edge of Caesar's province of Cisalpine Gaul. On January 10 Caesar crossed the Rubicon. Everywhere men had to decide which side to join. As Caelius had written Cicero about five weeks earlier, once arms replace discussion, one should join the probably victorious rather than the more honorable side.²⁴

To no one's surprise, Cicero vacillated. One letter to Atticus in February is particularly interesting. Cicero enumerated Pompey's faults and admitted that if he were to join Caesar he might get the triumph he had sought ever since a

minor victory while governor of Cilicia in 51: Caesar, Antony, and Balbus all politely greeted Cicero as *imperator* in their letters, playing to his vanity as a part of their effort to win him to neutrality, if not support. Knowing that such a move would ruin his standing with the *boni*, Cicero held back. He pondered imitating the tactic of L. Marcius Philippus, L. Valerius Flaccus, and Q. Marcius Scaevola back in the late 80s: join Cinna but with the intention of jumping to Sulla when the opportunity arose. Of Philippus, Cicero used the phrase *servire temporibus*, with the sense of “cooperate with those in power for the time being, bide one’s time,” the same phrase he later said others were applying to Plancus.²⁵

In letters that he knew Caesar would not see, Cicero frequently referred to his adherents in derogatory terms and he was inclined toward the legitimate government. He might have gone in that direction sooner, had he been of a more decisive nature and not been unimpressed with many of the senatorial leaders and their preparations.²⁶ From Cicero’s correspondence, but not from the *Bellum Civile* of Caesar, we learn that Caesar approached Cicero about serving as a mediator between him and Pompey. Caesar was invariably polite and flattering to Cicero and made strong efforts through mutual friends to keep Ciceronian respectability least neutral.²⁷

Caesar himself did not write at first, as he knew a letter from him would be too heavy-handed. Trebatius wrote in his stead in late January, and Cicero responded that he would remain on his various properties and avoid offending Caesar as long as war could be avoided. He knew Trebatius would forward the response to Caesar. Soon Caesar and Cicero exchanged letters, and Caesar visited him at Formiae about March 28.²⁸ Whether Caesar tapped Plancus to use his long-standing ties with Cicero and epistolary eloquence to exert gentle persuasion is unknown, as there are no letters between the former pupil and teacher from this period.

The *Bellum Civile* reveals its author’s decisive military and political actions but omits his last-minute offers to negotiate a compromise acceptable to all parties. They evidently came close to success, and the arrival of Labienus at Pompey’s camp tipped the balance to a military settlement.²⁹ From the start of the war Caesar openly proclaimed that he would not be a Sulla and would neither proscribe his opponents nor become a dictator. Many enemies steadily refused to accept defeat or to cooperate with him,³⁰ and this rejection compelled him step-by-step over the next four years both to assume enormous and unprecedented powers and to appoint outsiders to the offices of state, often members of his staff from the Gallic campaigns, who were willing, even anxious, to assist him. By 45 Caesar had become far more unrepublican than he had intended in 50, 49, and 48, and he thus paradoxically wound up proving Cicero correct: he was kingly, but not a king. Caesar’s actions alienated some

of those who had previously been his loyal supporters. The year was crucial.

As soon as weather permitted in 49 and while still in Italy, Caesar dispatched C. Fabius with three legions from winter quarters near Narbo in southwest Gaul across the Pyrenees into Spain to face the larger Pompeian army. Plancus was in this lead force, in command of two legions, and had thus probably been in *hibernain* southern Gaul (thus not in Italy) since the fall of 50. Caesar's arrival in late spring put an end to the independent commands of his subordinates. Fabius disappears forever, and nothing is heard of Plancus for almost three years. Whether he was on the Pharsalus or eastern campaigns of 48–47, and so at Cleopatra's court, is completely unknown.

Plancus' younger brother L. Plautius Plancus was moneyer in 47 and won designation to a praetorship for 43.³¹ His own next recorded appearance was with Caesar in Africa.³² In the late summer of 47, before the African campaign, Caesar's war-weary troops mutinied.³³ Realizing that many of his soldiers were in no mood for further fighting, Caesar may have given Plancus the duty of raising and drilling fresh troops whom he then commanded at the initial landing in Africa. At the end of 47 Plancus was again a legate, a sure sign that Caesar approved his performance in Spain in 49 and whatever his duties had been in 48–47. Caesar assembled a force of five legions of recruits and one of veterans, plus 2600 cavalry at Lilybaeum on the west end of Sicily. The transport ships set off for Africa on December 25 (by the pre-Julian calendar, now a couple of months ahead of the seasons). Bad weather scattered the ships, and Caesar, with Plancus alongside, finally landed near Hadrumetum (Sousse) with only 3000 infantry recruits (*tirones*) and 150 cavalry.

Plancus got permission from his commander to negotiate the surrender of the city, but his attempt failed. If the hypothesis that Plancus' family was from the area of Caieta and Formiae and had widespread commercial interests is correct, he may have had friends and/or relatives resident at the flourishing *conventus* of businessmen at Hadrumetum. His diplomatic efforts may have been aimed at inducing these contacts to turn the city over to Caesar, no doubt promising favorable terms. Whatever his hopes, he did not succeed, and Caesar later imposed a heavy fine on the city.³⁴

On January 1, 46, Caesar shifted his camp southwards to Lepti Minus, where some of the missing ships put in with a few veteran cohorts. The next day more ships brought his force up to 30 cohorts (= three legions) plus 400 cavalry and 150 archers.³⁵ Plancus does not appear again in the narrative of the African campaign, so it is unknown whether he fought at Thapsus and stayed for the entire campaign and returned with Caesar. Rabirius Postumus (pr. 48) and the future historian Sallust (pr. 46) are named shortly after the arrival of the first of the scattered ships, so Plancus may have been the only *legatus* with Caesar for a brief time.

Plancus has been suggested as the commander of Legio V *Alaudae* (“Larks,” a favored bird among the Gauls) in 46 and the author of the *Bellum Africum*.³⁶ Neither is likely. Though included in the corpus of Caesarian writings, the *Bellum Africum* is certainly not by Caesar; neither are its companions, the *Bellum Alexandrinum* and *Hispaniense*.³⁷ The unknown author seems to have been a participant in the entire campaign, which might fit Plancus as the first person Caesar named. In the absence of statements of the author’s identity and achievements, one has to rely on comparison and analysis of style, not a conclusive procedure. That “Plancus” adapted a passage in praise of Cato from a eulogy written by a kinsman, Munatius Rufus, is undemonstrable in the absence of Rufus’ piece.³⁸ Further, as Plancus is not mentioned after the initial operations, it is no more than probable that he was in Africa for the whole campaign, though Cicero wrote him there.

Legion V *Alaudae* participated in the African War and may have been the one veteran unit embarked in 47. Plancus has been thought its commander.³⁹ The sole reference to Plancus in the African campaign comes at a time when Caesar had only 3000 recruits on hand, though veteran cohorts showed up a few days later. Unless Plancus traveled separately from the legion he is said to have led and arrived ahead of it, it seems best to conclude that he was at this time in command of some fresh recruits, not the established V *Alaudae*.⁴⁰

Caesar departed for Sardinia in mid-June and reached Rome in late July 46. Whether Plancus accompanied him is uncertain, but he was back in Rome by 45. By the conclusion of the fighting in Africa, Caesar’s patience with Romans who opposed him was wearing thin. Cato’s spectacular suicide after Thapsus was powerful anti-Caesarian propaganda. He had pardoned a number of senators and military officers more than once, but as yet few senators from the front ranks and old-line leading families were cooperating with him. Most senators allied with Caesar were younger, from newer families, or even made senators by Caesar and working their way up the political ladder. Caesar steadfastly refused to proscribe, but he was imposing financial penalties,⁴¹ and important people who had fled Italy were finding it hard to get permission to return home.⁴²

At some point after learning of Caesar’s victory at Thapsus (April 6), Cicero wrote Plancus and asked him to approach Caesar about the money T. Antistius had bequeathed to C. Capito.⁴³ If Plancus could help Capito, he would simultaneously advance Cicero’s restoration, as Antony had confined him to Brundisium out of personal grievance and used the excuse that he had no authorization from Caesar to let Cicero return to Rome. Cicero himself realized “*tempori serviendum est*,” that he had to make the best of a bad situation.⁴⁴ Friends of Cicero and Caesar had been advocating his cause since the fall of 48: his old enemy P. Vatinius, Balbus, Oppius, L. Aelius Lamia, Trebatius Testa,

Hirtius, and Pansa.⁴⁵ By mid-46 Plancus may have been doing the same. After all, if Cicero had recommended him to Caesar, Plancus now owed Cicero a favor in return, had Caesar's ear as a trusted legate, and doubtless knew that Caesar wanted to be on good terms with the senior consular and great orator.

In July Cicero boasted to Papirius Paetus that Caesar's people, whom he saw "almost daily," were being genuinely courteous to him and that this implied Caesar's favor as well. He was very careful not to offend "Caesar who was all-powerful," and even professed a willingness to retire from public life.⁴⁶ However, he soon delivered two speeches which manifest a desire to influence Caesar's policies and restore the traditional state, the *pro Marcello* and the *pro Ligario*. If Plancus was back in Rome by this time and working for Caesar in some capacity, he was able to observe firsthand the evolution of Caesar's position in the state and the reactions to it, particularly among senators. He must have formulated his own views, and there is some reason to think that he eventually became disenchanted with his patron. In 46 Caesar was holding his third consulship and had been made dictator for ten years, apparently even before his return from Africa; the Senate had also assigned him the quasi-censorial task of the *cura morum*,⁴⁷ reform of morals and society.

In letters written in the summer of 46 to three exiled Republicans awaiting restoration, Cicero was depressed over his apparent lack of influence in public affairs and pessimistic as to the conditions of the state.⁴⁸ He admitted that Caesar was friendly and noted that he had frequent contact with certain of his associates who are said to be his own *veteres necessitudines*: Pansa first and foremost, but also Hirtius; Caesar's trusted political agents Balbus, Oppius, and Matus; and also the less important Postumius Rabirius and Tillius Cimber. There is no reference to Plancus, who we know was a *necessarius Ciceronis* and whom Cicero specifically labeled an old friend in the letter a few months earlier. Was he not as influential as those named (he was never an "operative" like Balbus, Oppius, and Matus), or was the warm friendship of earlier times cooling a bit? The simplest solution is that he was not in Rome at this time so literally not in proximity to Caesar. But in that case, where was he? Still in Africa, active in the establishment of the new province of Africa Nova of which Sallust was the initial governor?

Cicero seems to have improved his standing with Caesar somewhat by the late summer of 46 and for a time hoped for a reinvigoration of the *res publica* after the wreckage caused by the civil war.⁴⁹ Accordingly, he edged back into public affairs. When Caesar acceded to the Senate's appeal and permitted the return of M. Claudius Marcellus (cos. 51) and other Pompeian exiles, Cicero's spirits rose markedly. In a letter to Caecina he surveyed his relations with Caesar over the years, justified his conduct during the civil war (which was in fact not over), and stressed his friendship with the dictator.⁵⁰ Most important is

that the *pro Marcello* of August or September revealed Cicero's fresh hopes that the *res publica* might yet survive. A summary of the speech is useful. As Rawson pointed out, this speech appeals to "Caesar's desire for glory... . It is surely clear that in all [his appeals] Cicero is entirely sincere, however high-flown his language. His old policy of concord and unity has found a new content. But he was expressing a wish, rather than an expectation."⁵¹

Caesar's generous clemency to former opponents had elevated him to the level of the gods. Many old enemies have unreasonably feared his intentions; consequently, their opposition has been misguided, even foolish, but sincerely patriotic and not criminal. In readmitting them, Caesar is demonstrating his readiness to allow these good citizens to resume their contributions to the state (secs. 1–20).⁵² Caesar has preserved some elements of the state from destruction, notably the Senate, but a great deal of work remains to be done, and the welfare of Rome is inseparable from his. Cicero alludes with horror to the report of an attempt on Caesar's life and urges him to stay in office, for only he can superintend the necessary reforms. Caesar has not lived long enough! His greatest tasks, and thus the greatest achievements, lie in the future, not in the past – glorious though his deeds have been. He must labor on for the sake of Rome, even if he would prefer to retire. Cicero appealed to him "*ut rem publicam restituas*" ("that you restore the traditional state," sec. 29), an echo of the dictator's title "*rei publicae constituendae*" ("for establishing the traditional state"). The peroration sums up the themes.

Lest he offend the dictator with specifics, Cicero tactfully confines his remarks to principles and leaves vague the measures he calls on Caesar to take. The spirit of the speech is echoed by the "Sallustian" *Oratio ad Caesarem senem de Re Publica* which is also set in 46 but may not be genuine. The reforms turned out neither to restore the traditional state nor even to end the fighting. The final campaign of the war took Caesar to Spain. Within a few months, by the spring of 45, Cicero's optimism was gone.

Regrettably we do not know whether Plancus was in Rome and heard the speeches or read them some time later, if at all. He never refers to them in his letters. Any attempt to reconstruct Plancus' opinions of Cicero and Caesar must rest on assessments of his subsequent career and is almost entirely subjective. As will appear in [Chapter 8](#), it is possible that Plancus had the *pro Marcello* in mind in early 27 when he proposed the name "Augustus" for Caesar's great-nephew at the end of another civil war.

Caesar's shift toward autocracy was in good part due to the refusal of many conservatives to admit defeat. Cicero had accepted Pharsalus in 48 as decisive, but too many refused to give up the fight. Had more leading senators done as Cicero did, even if reluctantly, and withdrawn into retirement, they might have saved much of the ancestral state and their own role in it. Instead, they

rallied Africa and suffered another crushing defeat. Within a few months the remnants regrouped in Spain, long a Pompeian stronghold, and suffered another defeat. No senatorial general could defeat Caesar. The obstinate refusal to accept the verdict of the battlefield and to work with Caesar while they could still nudge him toward retention of the traditional institutions of the *res publica* compelled him to rely heavily on his subordinate officers rather than members of the old nobility. Precisely this goes far to explain the rapid rise of men like Plancus who would never have reached the highest offices in the state had there not been a dearth of candidates from the old leading families.⁵³

Plancus' first certain magistracy was in 45, when he was one of eight Prefects of the City under the overall supervision of the Master of the Horse, M. Aemilius Lepidus.⁵⁴ Caesar instituted a collegial prefecture in 46: the two senior *praefecti* were of praetorian standing, issued gold coinage, and were entitled to an escort of six lictors each. They outranked the remaining six *praefecti*, who issued only silver coinage and had just two lictors apiece. Plancus succeeded Hirtius as one of the senior prefects, and perhaps in late 47 had held an unattested praetorship. Caesar did not return to Rome until October of that year. Whatever Plancus had been doing under Caesar since 54, he had obviously fulfilled his duties to Caesar's satisfaction. He was neither solely a military man nor exclusively a political agent along the lines of Oppius, Matus, and Balbus. As prefect, Plancus struck some *aurei* and gold *quinarii* which indicates that his duties included control of the mint. The coinage may have been designed as a special issue to pay Caesar's soldiers, as it commemorated his defeat of the Pompeians at Munda in March. There is no good reason to accept the old notion that the Victoria on the coins is modeled in Caesar's wife Calpurnia.⁵⁵ One of the motifs is a tall jug (*capis*) symbolizing Plancus' recent appointment as an *epulo*, an office which is otherwise attested for him only on the epitaph at Caieta.⁵⁶

The extent of the prefects' duties is unclear and may not have been specified at the time. Much needed to be done quickly, and the increasingly autocratic Caesar probably saw little point in adhering to legal niceties when necessities were many and time was pressing. Caesar's own constitutional position was anomalous: in 46 he had been both consul and dictator, while Lepidus had been consul and Master of the Horse; in 45 he was consul again but had no colleague for most of the year and stayed on as dictator.⁵⁷

The prefecture was short-lived and disappeared after Caesar's death. Perhaps for this reason Plancus chose not to mention it in his epitaph, though he did include the priesthood, which he held for the rest of his life. As for Lepidus, almost invariably thought a lightweight in view of his humiliating fall from power in 36, Caesar clearly thought him capable and reliable.⁵⁸ Their ties may date to 62 when Caesar was praetor and became pontifex maximus.

Caesar made him a pontifex and after the assassination he seized the open office of pontifex maximus. It was argued in [Chapter 2](#) that Lepidus' family was the (or a) principal patron of the Munatii Planci, but it is unknown whether he influenced Caesar's decisions to advance Plancus' career.

In 49 Mark Antony had bought various pieces of property at auction, notably the Roman mansion of Pompey, but had then failed to pay the stipulated price. He evidently assumed that his military service to Caesar rendered him exempt from such financial obligations, especially as the former owner had been the commander of the opposing army. Disgraceful public conduct cost him Caesar's favor in 46–45. Now in 45 Antony feared that Plancus as prefect would either force him to make the required payments or sell off sureties as payment.⁵⁹ The incident reveals that Plancus' star was burning brightly while Antony's had seemingly flamed out. Antony dramatically sought Caesar's pardon by traveling to meet him at Narbo (Narbonne) as Caesar was on his way back from Spain in the summer of 45. He achieved reinstatement into Caesar's good graces and was made Caesar's consular colleague for 44. Lepidus was to serve as the dictator's Master of the Horse.

Caesar designated Plancus to be consul in 42 with Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus, who may have been Caesar's bastard son.⁶⁰ Theirs was to be a full-year consulship, not the suffect version which C. Trebonius and Q. Fabius Maximus held for the last three months of 45, much less the half-day farce of C. Caninius Rebilus on December 31, 45, after Fabius died on the last day of his term. Further, they would hold office during Caesar's projected absence in a war of revenge against Parthia. This was to be a position of true responsibility and honor, not a simple payoff to a loyal subordinate.

In short, Plancus' career compares favorably with that of any of Caesar's legates. He should not be set against *nobiles* like M. Aemilius Lepidus, P. Servilius Isauricus, P. Cornelius Dolabella⁶¹ (all of whom were patrician), Antony,⁶² C. Cassius Longinus, M. Junius Brutus, or Dec. Junius Brutus. The proper comparisons with Plancus are men of similar background, from lower-ranking senatorial families or from outside the Senate altogether, who thus owed their high office to Caesar's patronage and their personal merits and achievements (*virtus*), not the *gloria* of their names:

47: P. Vatinius (pr. 55)	consulships well after
Q. Fufius Calenus (pr. 59)	first eligible
46: C. Trebonius (pr. 48)	suffecti: Trebonius from October 1,
45: C. Caninius Rebilus (pr. ?)	Caninius on December 31

Designated by Caesar to hold consulships while he was to be away:

- 43: A. Hirtius (pr. 46)
C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus (pr. ?)
- 42: L. Munatius Plancus (pr. 45?)
D. Junius Brutus Albinus (pr. 45?)
- 41: M. Junius Brutus (pr. 44)
C. Cassius Longinus (pr. 44)

Of these. Hirtius may be the best parallel to Plancus. The family was from Ferentinum, where his father held the local censorship in the late 80s. Hirtius was born about the same time as Plancus (86–84), may have joined Caesar in 54 as a legate, and was certainly with him by 51, though he seems not to have held a field command.⁶³ In 46 Hirtius was both praetor and one of the new-style City Prefects, in which latter capacity his duties were primarily fiscal as he issued the gold coinage. The next year Plancus succeeded him as one of the two senior prefects, while Hirtius replaced D. Brutus as governor of Gallia Comata.⁶⁴ He was one of the Caesarians with whom Cicero claimed to be on good terms from late 48; for a time in 46 after divorcing Terentia Cicero thought of marrying his sister (who in terms of age at least would have been a far better match than the teenaged Publilia he picked), taught him oratory, dined with him, and wrote him with some frequency.⁶⁵ When Hirtius returned to Rome at the end of his Gallic governorship soon after Caesar's death, Plancus replaced him. Evidently Caesar regarded these two as a reliable team, for Plancus was to succeed him in the consulship.

Hirtius' consular colleague, C. Vibius Pansa, was perhaps a couple of years younger.⁶⁶ He seems not to have been with Caesar in the Gallic War. He struck coins in Rome in 48 and early 47, then governed Bithynia-Pontus in 47–46. Apparently, he was neither praetor nor a City Prefect, and in the spring of 45 he succeeded M. Brutus as governor of Cisalpine Gaul.⁶⁷ Pansa is another Caesarian who was simultaneously a friend of Cicero and joined him in the defense of Ligarius in 46. He was also the son-in-law of the Caesarian consul of 47, Q. Fufius Calenus.⁶⁸

Plancus' intended colleague for 42 was Dec. Junius Brutus Albinus. By adoption he was son of Dec. Brutus (cos. 77) and Postumia, though by birth the son of her brother a Postumius Albinus. He may, however, have been the result of Caesar's affair with Postumia in 82–81. He served with Caesar in the 50s (evidently not as legate because not yet in the Senate), was perhaps quaestor in 50, legate in 49 and then in 48 (or 47)–46 governor of Gallia Transalpina as Hirtius' predecessor. Quite possibly he was praetor in 45, and he certainly governed Cisalpina in 44–43, succeeding Pansa.⁶⁹ He was at least two years under age for the consulship, but equally clearly a favorite of Caesar, regardless of whether the dictator was his real father. The pairing of Plancus, *novus et municipalis*, and Brutus, *nobilis* and offspring of consuls, is striking.

In the period 48–41, covering the years when Caesar controlled the candidates, only Trebonius and Fabius Maximus in 45 are comparable, and they held office for only the final quarter of the year. The other pairs are either nobles (48, 46, 44, 41) or *novi* (47, 43).⁷⁰

The question whether Caesar planned to institute a monarchy at Rome has been long and inconclusively debated and is best regarded as insoluble.⁷¹ The evidence can be interpreted either way, and the many modern analysts who believe Caesar did intend to set up a kingship differ considerably among themselves as to what form the alleged kingship was to take. Caesar's close agents seem not to have known their master's plans, and modern ones are no surer. Matius' well-known despair three weeks after his death – "If Caesar could not find a way, who can?" – is matched by Yavetz's "I am far from solving the enigma of Caesar the man."⁷² There is no need to attempt a solution to this tangled controversy. Lacking royalty, Caesar seems not to have had a specific conception of what his position should be. He was more certain of what he rejected than of what he intended, and these rejections were often what conservative Romans – some of them hitherto his loyal supporters – held dear. A few interrelated certainties emerge from the shifting clouds of rumor and the scattered fragments of data.

One is that at the time of his death Caesar was not king, though he had a number of the trappings of royalty, including items of clothing thought to belong to the semi-mythical kings of the remote past. To judge from the offices he was then holding and had held over the previous few years, Caesar may have intended to retain the title of Dictator Perpetuus, which he had been named by mid- February 44 after a time as Dictator Perpetuus Designatus. He combined this unprecedented type of dictatorship with the consulship, though he planned to abdicate from the latter when he left Rome for the Parthian War.

A second certainty is that Caesar increasingly and publicly scorned the traditional forms and offices of Rome by accumulating magistracies and extra-constitutional honors and titles in a limitless manner. He diluted the Senate's power and prestige by increasing the number of senators and failing to consult it regularly on matters which were traditionally its prerogative. He drew in hundreds of men from the upper class of the towns around Italy (i.e., outsiders who only rarely would have gotten into the Senate in the old days). Members from the old senatorial families were bitterly resentful of Caesar's treatment of this venerable body. He increased the number of quaestors to forty, all of whom automatically became new senators annually; praetors to sixteen; and he established the new Urban Prefecture.⁷³ Caesarian followers won many of these high magistracies and priesthoods. Their loyalty was thereby won, and administrative efficiency may well have been increased, but at a price unacceptable to conservatives attached to the ancient traditional exclusivity.

Plancus was a prime beneficiary, though his family may have been in the Senate if his father was legate in 87: praetor, prefect, consul-designate, and priest.

A third certainty is the Senate's subservience. Largely packed with Caesar's appointees to fill the gaps left by casualties and exiles from the war, the Senate unceasingly scrambled to grant honors and powers to the ruler of Rome. This is in good part a consequence of the obstinate refusal of so many of the senators from the long-dominant older prestigious families who resented both him and his low-class appointees. (This in spite of the fact that for many years the leading families had intermarried with the municipal notables or *domi nobiles*. Marriage and the acquisition of wealth through dowries and properties was acceptable, but letting them share the top positions of state was clearly something else altogether.) Bad relations were compounded late in 45 or early in 44 when Caesar remained seated on a golden throne in front of his unfinished Temple of Venus Genetrix ("Ancestress") and did not rise out of respect when a delegation of senators came bringing him the latest honors. He said that he simply failed to see them, that is, that he would have stood out of respect had he been aware of them and did not intend any slight. This may be right. Caesar was not above snubbing individual senators, notably pesky tribunes he regarded as obnoxious, but it is doubtful that he would flagrantly dishonor the Senate as a body. However that may be, the affronted senators did not believe him. If Plancus was still in office as one of the new urban prefects, he, too, may have been offended at the dictator's lack of respect. A variant which faults Balbus looks like a later retelling.⁷⁴ Caesar's opponents interpreted the incident in the worst possible manner, and doubtless the gravity of the insult grew in repeated retellings.

Few senators were as intellectual and theoretical as Cicero and Brutus. Many would likely have accepted Caesar had he left them more *dignitas*. The "republican" cause was lost at Pharsalus in 48, though too many senators refused to admit it. Thapsus and Munda in 46–45 were the most tragic battles of the civil war, as they produced high casualties among the "bitter-enders"; drove Caesar toward the loneliness of autocracy, a position he had not sought at the start of the conflict (in spite of rumors to the contrary); and led some of his own followers to lose their enthusiasm for the despot he had become.

Plancus was in Rome in 45, in many respects the decisive year of Caesar's life. Caesar became sharply more autocratic in the months after he returned from the campaign at Munda, disparaging traditional Roman institutions and values, associating himself with the gods, and not indicating any intention to resign from supreme power. He was consul for the fourth time (three in the previous four years) and had no colleague. When he resigned in the autumn he appointed Trebonius and Caninius Rebilus to serve out the year. Rebilus was

suffect for Caesar, but when he died on December 31, Caesar had Q. Fabius Maximus for the portion of the last day of the year. The adherence to strict legality insulted both legality and the office. The dictatorship, specified as of ten years' duration in the spring or summer of 46, was being converted into a permanent office, as he is known to have been styled "Dictator Perpetuus Designatus" in late 45.⁷⁵ In 45 Caesar began regularly to ignore the stipulations of the *Lex Annalis* by appointing to office men who were too young or had not held the prerequisite posts. The new-style collegial Urban Prefecture, now in its second year of operation, has been seen as pointing toward monarchy. Then in the first two months of 44 came two famous incidents.⁷⁶ In January Caesar, returning from the Latin Festival on Monte Albano and greeted by the crowd as king, replied that his name was Caesar, not Rex ("King"). A diadem then appeared on Caesar's statue on the rostra; when tribunes removed this sign of royalty, Caesar removed them from office. At the Lupercalia on February 15, while Caesar was observing the festivities while seated on his regal throne, Antony offered him a wreath or diadem; three times Caesar waved it away in refusal. And finally, he ordered it to be taken to the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus as Rome's only king. To this one should add the various attributes of divinity which were being associated with him and which came close to declaring him a god, such as statues on the Capitol and in the Temples of Quirinus (the deified Romulus) and Venus Genetrix, the cult of his *clementia* (the royal or divine power to forgive, based on a supreme power over life and death, a power no Roman ought to have over other Romans).⁷⁷ Other rumors were less damaging because they were too far-fetched to gain widespread credence: a Sibylline oracle proclaimed that only a king could defeat the Parthians and, timed to coincide with his departure on the Parthian War, that he was going to move the capital to Alexandria.

Further, the Senate authorized the mint to strike coins with Caesar's portrait, an honor no living magistrate had received. Statues appeared in the most conspicuous locations in Rome – the rostra, Forum Iulium and Temple of Venus Genetrix, the Capitol – and it is often not clear who authorized them: some were the result of competition to honor the great man, others were erected in the hopes of discrediting him.⁷⁸

We would like to know what Plancus thought of all this, indeed, whether as one of the Urban Prefects he participated officially in the events of late 45 and the planning of the various ceremonies of early 44. Our sources are silent. Surely Caesar was fully aware of the depth of hatred at Rome, particularly among the aristocrats, for a kingship of any sort. In this case, Antony's highly public actions at the Lupercalia look like a staged ceremony at which Caesar could demonstrate publicly and definitively that he was not and did not wish to be a king of any sort. If so, might Plancus have been among those advising

him to make such a public demonstration? One wonders whether he discussed the drift of affairs with fellow Caesarians and Cicero, who by 45 had abandoned all hope that Caesar might take up the suggestions of the *pro Marcello*. Some persons are reported as still hoping for the restoration of the traditional state at the end of 45, but their names are not known. Sharper observers knew that Caesar was heading in a different direction, but this need not be an open monarchy. Cicero had also given up as pointless a letter to Caesar in which he intended to make a number of recommendations.⁷⁹

The Caesar of late 45 was a much different person from the Caesar of five years earlier, and the same can be said of political life at Rome. Plancus, for all that he owed his prominence and intended consulship to the dictator's patronage, may have judged that Caesar had crossed the bounds of acceptable conduct for a Roman, and that, like Agamemnon in Aeschylus' tragedy, he was walking in the crimson carpet and was guilty of *hybris*? If he did believe something like this, he was certainly not alone. His assessment of Caesar is not known. None of his surviving letters to Cicero are anything like the personal but yet critical analysis of Matius,⁸⁰ and no source reports any crisis of conscience for him. Critics might say he had no conscience which could suffer a crisis. Less prejudicially, perhaps, the question is whether one could be simultaneously loyal to Caesar and to the *res publica*, whether following Caesar meant abandoning Roman tradition.

Two thousand years of analysis have not eliminated all obscurities about events on the Ides of March 44. The conspirators were a large group, but not all names are on record, and their motives were varied. The other side of the same coin is that we cannot assess the strength of commitment to Caesar by his followers. Several plotters had been among Caesar's favorites and had held or were holding high office in 44 and were scheduled to do so again.⁸¹ Conspirators and Caesarians were largely from the same group, knew one another, and doubtless talked on numerous occasions, though discretion doubtless inhibited putting much in writing. If it is true, an incident concerning Trebonius may be revealing. He is said to have approached Antony at Narbo in 45, when Antony sought Caesar's pardon and restoration to favor. Some conspirators thought Antony a less-than-convinced Caesarian. Equally interesting, Antony declined but did not inform Caesar that certain people were turning against him and were willing to use violence since he would not accept their values. Antony, in other words, was perhaps unwilling to stake his future on total loyalty to Caesar and was beginning to shift so as to be clear in the event of Caesar's demise. If not treason, this was certainly not fidelity. Others, hitherto loyal Caesarians, may also have been edging away from their master, each on his own according to how he assessed the winds of politics. Trebonius was probably not the only plotter who quietly sounded out

Caesarians thought to be disaffected, and Antony not the only Caesarian who kept suspicions of a conspiracy to himself.

Appian says that “the most courageous” of the Caesarians were sought out and names five who were won over to the conspirators’ side: Decimus Brutus, C. Casca, C. Trebonius, Tillius Cimber, and L. Minucius Basilus. It is not clear whether Appian regarded all other prominent Caesarians as firm in their loyalty – as Hirtius, Pansa, and Plancus – or just did not know any more names. How many Caesarian malcontents were approached and declined to join but stayed silent as to what they knew?⁸² Servius Galba, a legate from the 50s, went over to the plot, and Ti. Claudius Nero evidently at least sympathized, as on March 17 he voted against the amnesty. Was there perhaps widespread, if vague, knowledge that some sort of conspiracy was in the offing? Was Caesar almost the only one caught totally by surprise on the Ides? Nothing indicates that Plancus was in any way a part of the conspiracy or that he shared the intellectual and theoretical opposition of Brutus. Neither is there any reason to think that anybody attempted to suborn him or that he would have joined a plot if asked. His rapid ascent was so exclusively due to Caesar that the conspirators must have regarded him as wholly Caesar’s man. Unlike Antony, the Bruti, or Cassius, he had neither illustrious ancestry nor extensive clientele to advance his career. The famous insistence of M. Brutus that only Caesar should be slain certainly preserved Antony’s life and may have done the same for Plancus and others. However that may be, one can still infer that Plancus had doubts as to the direction in which Caesar’s policies were heading and his rapidly growing autocracy, but yet was unwilling to resort to violence to restore the traditional institutions. He may have judged that assassination would not cure the ills, just as a year later he regarded Cicero’s “solution” as simplistic.

It is worth hazarding the guess that Plancus, like so many Romans, had an emotional attachment to the ancient forms and institutions of the *res publica* and disapproved of Caesar’s blatant scorn for them. His feelings may have approximated those of Matius, with the difference being that Plancus had a political career: Matius followed Caesar loyally and grieved at his assassination at the hands of those whom he had spared, but did not agree with all of the dictator’s policies. He had a divided loyalty. If Matius’ *apologia* had not survived, he would be regarded as only one of Caesar’s henchmen: the other allusions to him in Cicero’s letters give no hint of the content of his honest missive of the fall of 44. This single letter allows us to see that at least one of Caesar’s associates had misgivings about his actions and intentions. Others may have felt similarly. If Plancus disapproved of some of Caesar’s acts and his autocracy, he would have to tread carefully lest he lose Caesar’s patronage and his designated consulship. Self-interest, a trait throughout his

long career, called for him to cooperate with the dictator. There is no sign he did otherwise.

Plancus was probably present at the assassination, as he attended the session of the Senate on the March 17 and so was probably in Rome on March 15. Only L. Calvisius Sabinus and L. Marcius Censorinus are said to have attempted to protect Caesar when the conspirators struck, though this may mean little more than that they were physically close; no Caesarian was armed. Caesar was an easy target: seated, prevented from much movement by the cumbersome toga, and without bodyguard when in the Senate. Once he was dead, Plancus had to tread even more carefully. Caesar's former officers who had experience of civil war moved very cautiously in 44 and supported various forms of compromise. That is the subject of the next chapter.

Notes

- 1 For legates as senators: J. Harmand 1967, 268–81. *MRR* 2.74–5 and 3.146: quaestorship in 55, citing Sumner 1971, 359–60. Under Caesar's supremacy any elections were a formality, as candidates were virtually appointed.
- 2 Goldsworthy 2006, 188–92 on the infrequency with which senatorial and equestrian officers appear in Caesar, who had a higher value on his experienced centurions. The most striking thing about Caesar's legates is their less-than-senatorial standing. Few members of the highest aristocracy served under him (perhaps he didn't ask them); P. Crassus, Ser. Galba, Brutus and Cassius, and Caesar's cousin L. Caesar are exceptions.
- 3 Plancus: Caes., *BG* 5.24.3 and 25.4, in the year 54. Mamurra: Cat. 29 (from Formiae, so a neighbor of Plancus), 41, 43, 57, 94, 105, 114 and 115; Pliny, *NH* 36.48. See Quinn 1973, 41–4. Unnamed legates at *BG* 2.20.3; 4.23.5.
- 4 See Wiseman 1971, 16–22; Harris 1985 esp. chap. 1. Note Cic., *pro Murena* 22–30.
- 5 Cic., *pro Balbo* 61; *de Prov. Cons.* 24–8 and *Fam.* 1.7 = SB 18. Keppie 1984, 80–99 for increase of Caesar's army to 10 legions by 51; cf. Goldsworthy 2006, 233; Ramsay 2009. Caesar began with legions VII–X, raised XI and XII on his own, and XIII and XIV in 58/57: Dio 38.8.5; *BG* 1.10.3; 2.2.1; Suet., *Caes.* 24.2.
- 6 Goldworthy 2006, 320: "With the exception of Labienus, Caesar's legates appear to have been men of modest talent, and he did not encourage too much initiative on their behalf." Cf. Riggsby 2006, 83–105.
- 7 Labienus' defection in 49 caused such a stir in part because he had been Caesar's favorite legate all through the 50s. Other former legates were among the assassins in 44, and were labelled traitors by Caesarian loyalists.
- 8 See Badian's analysis of the incident reported in Suet., *DJ* 23: 1974, esp. 160–61.; cf. *MRR* 3.17 on Verus and *de Prov. Cons.* 43, 58, 64–5. Caesar's position after Luca: Ramsay 2009, 40–2.
- 9 For a time Claudius worked with the triumvirs and got his client C. Messius a spot on Caesar's staff in 54: *Att.* 4.15.9 = SB 90. See Gruen 1974, 318–19. Note Lucretius' remarks and Caesar's strained response in *pro Plancio* 78, 86–1 in March 54. Ahenobarbus was married to Cato's sister Porcia. His son adhered to Caesar's assassins and then to Antony

- in preference to Caesar's heir Octavian.
- 10 P. Claudius, just adopted into a plebeian family, campaigned for the tribunate for 58 by promising to punish Cicero for executing Roman citizens (the Catilinarian conspirators) without a trial at the close of 63. Caesar's offer of a legateship (without danger) would remove Cicero from Rome and Clodius' attack, but Cicero declined.
 - 11 Known from scattered references in Cicero's letters in 50. Cf. Gelzer 1968, 137–38, 168 with references.
 - 12 See Wiseman 1966, 108–15; Stockton 1971, 230, esp. note 67; McDermott 1971, 702–17; Shatzman 1975, 425–27.
 - 13 From book 7 of *Fam.*: 5, 7, 10, 16, 1, 13 = SB 26, 28, 33, 32, 24 36. Ramsay 2009, 45 for the desires “of young city folk who joined Caesar on campaign with the hope of snatching quick riches and returning to the civilized world of Roman society”; no mention of Plancus.
 - 14 Rawson 1975b, 134: the considerable correspondence between Caesar in Gaul and Cicero has been mostly lost, but “it seems that each was susceptible to the charm and brilliance of the other, and for a while the relationship flourished.” Caesar promised various rewards for Cicero (“a priesthood, the censorship, or a second consulship, possibly with himself”) and perhaps his brother. Ramsay 2009, 45–8 agrees. Q. Cicero as legate greatly strengthened the ties between Marcus and Caesar, and Quintus hoped for a consulship.
 - 15 Goldsworthy 2006, 190 points to the frequency of letters back and forth. “There was clearly a constant flood of information going back to Rome from the army in 56 BC”; cf. 236, 344 for subsequent years.
 - 16 *Fam.* 7.5 = SB 26; *Qfr.* 2.10–12 = SB 14–16; *Att.* 4.19 = SB 93. Goldsworthy 2006, chap. 14 for Q. Cicero's role in the heavy fighting of 54. Quintus was “serving as a legate simply to confirm good relations between his brother and Caesar.” He did what he was expected to do but was not really a soldier and complained of the toughness of life in Gaul. Caesar gave him favorable write-ups as a way of gaining favor with M. Cicero (301).
 - 17 See Brunt 1989, 394. Others who were friends with both Cicero and Caesar are L. Aelius Lamia, C. Vibius Pansa (*Fam.* 6.12 = SB 226), C. Matius, and Plancus' legate of 43 C. Furnius (*Att.*, 9.6 = SB 172). The first letter to Plancus dates to 46 (*Fam.* 13.29 = SB 282).
 - 18 Rambaud 1966.
 - 19 For an analysis: Wightman 1985, 39–43. The leader of the revolt was not a Carnute but the Treveran Indutiomarus: *BC* 5.1–7. See generally 5.26–58; Plancus is at 5.24; 6.11–20 for Gallic customs and the Druids. Riggsby 2006, 83–105 discusses the revolt(s) and Caesar's assessment that the Gauls had so advanced in military skills as to be a serious threat to Rome which must be eliminated; *virtus* on the part of is legates meant following his orders and not leaving their fortified camps (as did Cotta and Titurius).
 - 20 BG 7.90 names nine legates, but the list is not comprehensive; Caesar's army was more than ten legions, and the number of legates need not correspond to that of legions on a one-to-one basis. L. Caesar in Narbonensis appears at 7.65; Trebonius is in 8.6. Watching Labienus: Rambaud 1966, 9; rejection of the idea: Tyrrell 1972. The Plancus in Caelius' letter of 51 (*Fam.* 8.1.4 = SB 77) is Bursa: see Appendix 2.
 - 21 Cicero agonized over the right course of action: see Brunt 1986, 12–32 and 1989, 363–71. He could never quite trust Caesar but realized the “Republicans” were little better, so he preferred neutrality as long as it was possible but finally decided that his *dignitas* and *officium* compelled him to join Pompey.
 - 22 The conservatives at Rome may have dangled the prospect of a consulship to win over Labienus: see Tyrrell 1972, 433–35. For Sextius, see later.

- 23 See Adcock 1955, 3. The discovery of hundreds of wooden tablets at Vindolanda since 1973 gives some idea of the extent to which Romans corresponded, albeit they date to a century and a half later.
- 24 On August 1, 51, Caelius informed Cicero that Caesar was industriously purchasing the “friendship” of scoundrels: *Fam.* 8.4 = SB 81. By February 50 Curio had converted to Caesar (*Fam.* 8.6.5 = SB 88; cf. 2.13.3 = SB 93). The consul Paullus remained more a neutral than a true Caesarian (*Att.* 6.3.4 = SB117; *Fam.* 8.11 = SB 91).
On Paullus, see Weigel 1979, 637–46; App. 2.26; Dio 40.59.4 and 63.5; Plut., *Caes.* 29.3; Suet., *DJ* 29. Caelius’ advice: *Fam.* 8.14.3 = SB 97. See Brunt 1989, 17–24; Gruen, 1974, 156–57, 449–51; Galzer 1968, 178–80.
- 25 All biographies of Cicero trace his agonizing shifts in thought. *Att.* 8.3 = SB 153; dated Feb. 18–19; cf. 9.2 = SB 169. Remark about Plancus: *Fam.* 10.3.3 = SB 355.
- 26 *Att.* 7.20–8.1; 8.7f.; 9.2A.2; 9.18f.; 10.4l; 10.7f.; 10.12 = SB 144–51, 155, 158, 169, 187, 189, 195, 198f., 203; *Fam.* 9.6.3 = SB 181 (to Varro); 7.3 = SB 183 (to M. Marius).
- 27 Dolabella: *Att.* 9.23 = SB 189; Dolabella and Caelius: *Att.* 7.21.2 = SB 145; Caelius: *Fam.* 8.15 = SB 149; 8.16 = SB 153 (which is also *Att.* 10.9A = SB 200A) and 11.16 = SB 154. For the two Balbi: *Att.* 8.2 = SB 152; 8.9A = SB 160; 8.11.5 = SB 161; 8.15A = SB 165A; 9.13A = SB 181A. Balbus and Oppius together: *Att.* 9.7.3 = SB 174.
Matius and Trebatius Testa: *Att.* 9.15A = SB 184A; 10.1.3 = SB 190; 10.11.4 = SB 202. Ser. Rufus: *Att.* 10.7 = SB 198; 9.19 = SB 189; 10.14 = SB 20; *Fam.* 4.1f. = SB 150f. In *Att.* 10.8.3 = SB 199 Cicero alludes to “friends.” A letter from Antony professed friendship: *Att.*, 10.8A = SB 199A; cf. 10.10 = SB 201.
- 28 *Att.* 7.23.3 = SB 147; 8.2 = SB 152; 8.11.5 = SB 161; 9.6A = SB 172A; 9.11 = SB 178; 9.11A = SB 178A, widely circulated; 8.9 = SB 188; 10.3A = SB 194; 10.8A = SB 199B. The personal interview: 9.18 = SB 187. Also *Att.* 9.18 and 10.6 = SB 187, 197; 10.9A = SB 200A (which is also *Fam.* 8.26 = SB 153); *Att.* 10.12 = SB 203; 10.13 = SB 205; and 10.15 = SB 210. Trebatius was at Capua with Matius by late March.
- 29 *Att.* 7.11–17 = SB 134–41; 9.15 = SB 183; 10.1.3 = SB 189; *Fam.* 16.12 = SB 146, to Tiro.
- 30 Welch 2006 passim illustrates the determination of the diehards to fight on in the “lost cause” of ancient Rome.
- 31 Coins of 47: Crawford 1974, 468 no. 453 = pl. liii no. 23. The identity of the M. Plotius wounded in Caesar’s service in 48 (*BC* 3.19.7) is unknown, and Münzer (*RE* “Munatius” no. 26) was wrong to identify him with Plautius Plancus. Sumner 1971, 366 n. 55, citing Dio 43.51.3–5) makes him the youngest of three brothers, with T. Plancus Bursa in the middle. On the latter, see Appendix 2. D’Arms 1981, 66, 75, and 80 thinks Plautius Plancus was adopted by one of the Plotii involved in the cosmetics and perfume trade at Capua and Pompeii. This attractive theory may underlie the story of his death, on which see the end of Chapter 5.
- 32 He may have served as abbreviated (three-month) praetorship in the latter part of 47: Sumner 1971, 359–60.; *MRR* 3.146. Since Plancus was probably born by 84 (if not 86, as is often held) he would have been slightly under the required age of thirty-nine for a praetorship. A preferable hypothesis is that he combined a praetorship with an urban praefecture in 45: SB commentary on *Att.* 12.52 = SB 295; *MRR* 2.313, 307.
- 33 *B.Afr.* 8 for Sallust and Rabirius. Mutinies: App. 2.92–4; Dio 42.52–4; *Att.* 11.21–2 = SB 236; *B.Afr.* 28.2; Suet., *DJ* 70. See Syme 1964b, 36–7; Gelzer 1968, 262–63.
- 34 Banker at Agrigentum on the south coast of Sicily and well sited for trade with North Africa: a *tessera nummularia* of 72: *ILLRP* 1011; cf. Crawford 1985, 241; Shatzman 1975, 75–

83. The *conventus*: Cic., in *Verr*, 2.2.6, 119; 4.67, 93; 5.40, 155. See Brunt 1971, 230–31. Punished by Caesar: *B.Afr.* 90, 97, along with those at Thysdrus and Utica. Considius evidently had command of the coastal cities, as *B.Afr.* names him at Thysdrus, where he died (86, 93). *ILLRP* 394 attests his presence at Clupea as well. Munatii on Delos: *ILLRP* 359–60.
- 35 *B.Afr.* 1–47 passim; Plancus *legatus* in section 4, his *tirones* in 5.
- 36 Köstermann 1973, 48–63. He does not cite Rambaud’s 1966 study, where it is suggested that Plancus commanded V Alaudae (799–800).
- 37 See Adcock 1955, 101–08. Suet., *DJ* 56.1. Oppius and Hirtius have been proposed for these three non-Caesarian works. Adcock accepts Hirtius for the *B Alex*, but not for the *B.Afr.*, which thus remains anonymous; the *B.Hisp.* with its bad Latin is often thought to have been by a centurion or common soldier.
- 38 Köstermann 1973, 57–9 and 62. Section 22 (cf. 88) looks more like a rhetorical set piece such as historians were fond of composing. See Geiger 1979. Rufus’ *Memorabilia* evidently covered the years 67–49, judging from the earliest and latest dateable references in Plut., *Cato minor* 9.1–4 and 52; if so, they did not extend to the African campaign and Cato’s death. Köstermann admits that the style of the *B.Afr.* does not resemble that of Plancus’ letters to Cicero and unconvincingly defends his thesis by saying that the *B.Afr.* is only a draft version.
- 39 For the legion: *B.Afr.* 28, 47, 60; the one veteran unit of 1.57. Legions IX, X, XIII, and XIV arrived later (34, 53, 60), so XXVI and XXVIII must be among the newly raised legions. V Al. was raised in 52/51 from the twenty-five cohorts of BG 8.24.2 and “regularized” early in 49 when the war began. It may be the unnumbered legion with VIII, IX, XII, and XIV under Fabius in Spain: Caes., *BC* 1.43–5. See also Keppie 1984, 104, 110–12, 140–41; Suet., *DJ* 24.2.
- 40 *B.Afr.* 2–10 passim. 6.5 mentions “*cohortibus paucis ex veteranis quae secum habebat collocatis*,” incompatible with the 3000 infantry of *tirones* of 3.1 and 5, but less than a legion.
- 41 *B.Afr.* 90, 97 for fines on three African *conventus*; and he sold off the property of Romans who fought him. See also Plut., *Caes.* 59.2; Caesar, *BC* 2.36.1; and observe Cicero on Ligarius at *Fam.* 6.13 = SB 227.
- 42 *Att.* 11.7 = SB 282, December, 46; 11.12 = SB 223, March 47.
- 43 *Fam.* 13.29 = SB 282, discussed in Chapter I; cf. *Fam.* 9.2, 9.5 and 9.6 = SB 179, 182, 181; Plut., *Cic.* 39.
- 44 *Fam.* 9.7.1 = SB 178. See the introduction, note 1 on the various interpretations of time-serving. Observe the similar phrases in *Att.* 11.21.3 = SB 226 (“*ad tempus accommodare*”) and 11.24.5 = SB 234 (“*de vultu et oratione ad tempus accommodanda*”; *Fam.* 4.9.2 = SB 231 (“*tempori cedere*,” defined as “*necessitate patere, semper sapientis est habitum*”).
- 45 See the string of letter to Atticus, *Att.* 11.5–24 = SB 216–37.
- 46 *Fam.* 9.16–20 and 7.33 = SB 190–95; friendly with Hirtius, Dolabella, and Balbus.
- 47 Caesar had been consul in 59 and 48, dictator briefly in 49, and for a year from October 48. See *MRR* 2.294–95, citing Dio 43.14.3–4 and dating the ten-year dictatorship to late April 46 after arrival of news of the victory at Thapsus. See also *MRR* 3.107–08 for discussion of a recently found inscription from Tarentum: the dictatorships were probably *rei publicae constituendae* and not *rei gerundae causa* as in *MRR* 2.194: C IVLIO C [f cae]SARE PAT[re patriae] IMPERATO[re dict(tatore)] / REI PVBLIC[ae con /stitu]ENDAE. Cf. *Att.* 11.31.3 = SB 302 for the phrase “*rebus constitutis*” (May 28, 45).

- 48 *Fam.* 4.15; 6.12; 6.13 = SB 225–27 (SB’s dating): to P. Nigidius Figulus, T. Ampius Balbus, Q. Ligarius.
- 49 *Fam.* 4.4.2–4 = SB 203 described Caesar as “rather moderate” and states that on the day when Caesar permitted Marcellus’ return Cicero thought he was beholding “*speciem aliquam quasi reviviscentis rei publicae*.” See also *Fam.* 12.17f.; 13.58; 6.10 = SB 204–05, 211, 223; all written August to October 46.
- 50 *Fam.* 6.6 = B 374. As Shackleton Bailey observes in his commentary, “Cicero’s attitude toward Caesar dominant was [at this moment] more favourable than at any time before or afterwards,” referring to secs. 8, 10, 13. See also *Fam.* 4.4 and 9 = SB 203, 231, Caesar not following the unspecified advice of unnamed advisors. See also *Fam.* 6.8 = SB 235, later.
- 51 Rawson 1975b, 218–19.
- 52 *Pro Ligario* 17–19 picks up this theme that many opponents were misguided and made errors of judgment. Caesar has pardoned Cicero, so surely he can pardon Ligarius (secs. 6–16). Note also sec. 38: “in no way do men more nearly approach the gods than in conferring well-being on men.”
- 53 See Suet., *DJ* 76.2; Dio 43.28.2 and 43.48.1–4; *Att.* 12.52 = SB 294.
- 54 Alföldi 1974, 1–14; Yavetz 1983, 122–26; Masi 1971, 5.239–50.
- 55 Babelon, *Monnaies de la République romaine* 2.239; accepted by Jullien 1892, 27; Petrocchi 1958, 148 (misdating the prefecture to 47 by saying that it was the year after Pharsalus). Sutherland 1974), 94: the coins were “doubtless for military distribution after [the] crushing defeat of the Pompeians at Munda in Spain.” He does not illustrate the coins, but they are similar to those struck by Hirtius in 46, nos. 149–60. See Crawford 1974 no. 475; see 485 and 736 = plate Ivi = *BMCR* nos. 4118, 4122–23; R.A.G. Carson, *Principal Coins of the Romans* (London, 1978), no. 239. For Caesar, Victoria and Calpurnia see Weinstock 1971, 91–112.
- 56 Lewis 1955, 56 and 92–3. Caesar increased the college from seven to ten; Dio 48.32.4. Wiseman 1971, 69–72.
- 57 See Sumner 1971, conclusion on 370–71. Caesar ignored the terms of the *Lex Annalis* more extensively than anyone before him.
- 58 See Weigel 1992 passim; *MRR* 2.171, 173, 205–06.
- 59 *Cic.*, *Phil.* 2.57–78, with Plancus in 78, a sequel to 71–4; cf. *Plut.*, *Ant.* 10; Dio 42.50.5; 45.9.4 (Antony kept the property in spite of restoration of money at Sextus Pompey’s pardon); 45.28.3–4 and 48.28.2. For Antony’s powers and actions under Caesar in 48–4, see Huzar 1978.
- 60 See Gelzer 1968, 309. The elections were a farce: Dio 43.47.2; 49.1; 51.3 and 6; *Plut.*, *Caesar* 57.5 and *Brutus* 7.1–5. Hirtius and Pansa were “elected” for 43, and then in March Plancus and Dec. Brutus for 42. Several times in 43 Cicero refers to Plancus as “consul designate,” as does Plancus himself: *Fam.* 10.6.1, 3; 10.8; 20.1 and 11.15.1 = SB 370, 371, 407, 422; cf. *Phil.* 3.37–8. See later on Brutus.
- 61 The Aemilii, Servilii, and Cornelii were patrician *gentes*. Isauricus’ father was a leading optimate in the 70s. Dolabella had become a plebeian in 48 and was conspicuously exempted from the regulations of the *Lex Annalis*: see Sumner 1971, 261–62. He was also Cicero’s former son-in-law.
- 62 Antony had considerable talents when he chose to use them, and a lack of self-discipline and *dignitas* led to his shameful downfall. See Huzar 1978, 38–9. His mother Julia was second cousin to Caesar.
- 63 *ILLRP* 585 for the father; Sumner 1971, 256–57, 269, 359–60, for his birth; and *MRR* 2.572 and Wiseman 1971, 235. Sumner has shown that Caesar began grossly to ignore the age

- requirements for the magistracies in 45, so Hirtius was a couple of years too young for praetorship and consulship.
- 64 For the City Prefects, see Alföldi 1974, esp. 7–10. For the governorship: *MRR* 2.309, citing esp. *Att.* 12.40 and 14.9.3 = SB 281, 363; Wightman 1977a, 105–25, esp. 117–20 for coins he minted in Gaul; summarized in 1985, 44.
- 65 *Att.* 12.11 = SB 249 (late Nov. 46); *Fam.* 9.6 and 16 = SB 181, 190; *Att.*, 12.34 = SB 273 (late March 45); 12.37A = SB 277 (May). After Caesar’s death Cicero changed his tone: see the next chapter.
- 66 Sumner 1971, 255. Pansa was born by 84, presumably quaestor by 53, and tribune in 51.
- 67 Sumner 1971, 255.; Crawford 1974, 1.464–65 for coins in 48; and *MRR* 3.220, supplementing 2.258, 299, 310; Dio 43.51; and *Att.* 14.19.2 = SB 272 for consul designate.
- 68 *Fam.* 6.12 = SB 22, friendship with Cicero; *pro Ligario* 1. Calenus was some fifteen years older than Pansa, as he was praetor in 59 and so born by ca. 99: Sumner (1971), 259–60.
- 69 See Syme 1964b, 134; Shackleton Bailey 1988, 59: Caesar as father: Syme, *RP* 3. 1240–44; also Sumner 1971, 358–59, 364, dating his birth to 83–1 and advocating a praetorship in 45. Syme 1987, 325 for Brutus with Caesar through the Gallic War but only attested in 56 and 51. Plut., *Ant.* 11.1 for closeness to Caesar. See also *MRR* 2 under the relevant years and 3.112–13.
- 70 Like C. Fabius, lost from view after 49, T. Sextius might have been a good parallel to Plancus: Sumner 1971, 360; *MRR* 3.199; Gascou 1984, esp. 108–10. Sextius was born by 85, quaestor in 54, perhaps praetor in 45 (running two years behind Plancus who was a year younger), governor of Africa Nova in 44–2, and Nova et Vetus in 42–0, at which point he disappears.
- 71 Yavetz 1983 collects the scholarship. The thesis of Collins 1955 is attractive: broadly, Caesar was corrupted by power. Rejected by the *boni*, he became cynical of the traditions of the state (esp. 456, 461–62.). Gelzer 1968, 272–76. lays out the evidence for Caesar’s disdain of the *Res Publica* and makes a good case for monarchy. For rejection of kingship: Rawson 1975a.
- 72 *Att.* 14.1 = SB 355; *Fam.* 11.27–8 = SB 348–49; 6,7,4 = SB 237. Yavetz 1983, 56, 202–03.
- 73 See Yavetz 1983, 1127–32, 172; Dio 43.41.2; *Att.* 14.6.2, 15.6.2 = SB 360, 386; App. 2.128; Suet., *DJ* 76.3, 41.
- 74 Yavetz, 1983, chap. 6, esp. 188–90 and 212 emphasizes Caesar’s disloyalty to Roman traditions. The *res publica* was an entire way of life as well as a form of government. Venus was Genetrix, “Ancestress” of the Roman people as a whole, and of the Julian clan in particular because her son Aeneas was father of Julius.
- 75 Broughton discusses the evidence: *MRR* 3.107, amending 2.318.
- 76 For interpretations of Caesar’s policies in his final months: Yavetz 1983 chap. 6. Ancient writers agree that he desired to become king: Plut. *Caes.* 60–1; Dio 44.10–11; App. 2.106–09; Suet., *DJ* 76–0. Balsdon 1958 rejected noncontemporary evidence as romanticizing and elaboration.
- 77 See Weinstock’s 1971 controversial analysis of Caesar’s aspirations. Caesar aimed at a kingship based on himself as Jupiter Julius, Caesar as *synnaos Quirini*: *Att.* 12.45; 12.51–2; 15.28 = SB 290, 293f.; 299; *Phil.* 2.110f.; 13.41 and 47; Suet., *DJ* 76; Dio 43.45.3. See also Ulrich 1993. The Forum Iulium, focused on the Temple of Venus Genetrix, was “a physical manifestation of the ego of its patron, and a setting for his deeds.” It “siphoned off the authority of the Forum Romanum [and] reflected the impudence and even recklessness” of its patron (89).

- 78 Zanker 2009. Suet., *DJ* 76.1 and Dio 44.4 for coins. Statue of Caesar on Capitol as *hemitheos* (demigod): Dio 42.21.2; 43.14; Cic., *pro Deiot.* 34. *Equus Caesaris* in Forum Iulium: Statius, *Silvae* 1.85; cf. Pliny, *NH* 34.18; 8.155 and Suet., *DJ* 61. After Munda, in late 45: statue in Temple of Quirinus as *theos aniketos* (*deus Invictus*): Dio 43.45; Cic., *Att.* 12.45.2 = SB 290. See further Dio 43.45 and 44., and 43.
- 79 App. 2.107. Cicero: *Att.* 12.40, 51–2; 13.1, 26–7, 31 = SB 281, 293–94, 296. 298–99, 307. Cicero judged Caesar so tyrannical as to be beyond reach by a letter of admonition.
- 80 *Fam.* 11.28 = SB 349.
- 81 See Gardner 2009, 68 and Lintott 2009.
- 82 Pelling is doubtful, 1988. If the story is true, Trebonius may have been counting on Antony's resentment at having been disgraced by Caesar, whereas Antony on the other hand could have used the plot to help gain reinstatement if all else failed. App. 2.113; cf. 3.9, where Octavian, on learning of Caesar's death, was uncertain how many senators were involved. Suet., *Tib.* 4.1 and *Galba* 3.2.

4 Plancus without Caesar

Proconsul of Gaul, March–December 44

Overview of Chapters 4–8

The assassination of Caesar failed to restore the *res publica* and instead created political uncertainty. His former associates and opponents maneuvered with a mixture of passion, caution, and perhaps desperation to establish control. Events on the Ides of March changed the participants and the nature of political life at Rome. It was soon apparent that the conspirators were only one faction in the Senate and did not represent majority sentiments. The rest of the year was a period of cautious movements, as commanders and politicians who had experienced the bloodshed and vagaries of the battlefield in the civil war of 49–45 sought to work out a compromise and avoid another war and the shedding of citizens' blood. The arrival of Caesar's great-nephew and adopted son Octavian in the spring complicated matters. Most of Caesar's following gradually coalesced into a coalition to avenge their fallen leader. Cicero's voice was powerful in advocating immediate military and political measures, as he strove constantly in his "Philippic" orations and numerous letters to raise armies in a patriotic war against Antony. Furious in his expenditure of energy, but rash and unconvincing to those who had experience of warfare, Cicero gradually dragged many senators into a war they were reluctant to fight.

Plancus had no more insight than anyone else, and now for the first time he was mostly on his own. Caesar's favor underlay his rise to a position of power and prominence and promised yet more – the consulship. Not long after the Ides of March he took up his duties as proconsul of Gallia Comata, and he is not attested in the city after late March 44 until December 29, 43, when he celebrated a triumph. His information always lagged behind events, coming by couriers through personal letters from all the major participants (only the exchange with Cicero is partially preserved) and official communiqués.

Consequently, he could only react to developments and influence the course of events but not formulate policies. As proconsul of Comata he had an army and that made him a major factor in the power struggle. He was caught in the middle of the maneuvering and war of words in 44, which became a war of weapons as spring opened in 43. He had no liking for those who murdered Caesar, did not trust the wisdom of Cicero's bellicose speeches, was suspicious of both Antony and Lepidus, and distrusted Octavian as too young and shifty. He shared the view of most others who had lived through the civil war in desiring a compromise which would prevent a reprise of fighting. Caution and reluctance to commence open warfare are the major theme of this chapter and the words reappear often. What those who disliked him labelled "time-serving" others might more justly label common sense.

Further complicating his governorship, his province had only recently been conquered, and in spite of countless casualties many Gauls were still unwilling to accept Roman rule and might pose a threat. Caesar's victory at Alesia and subsequent mop-up operations had continued into the 40s. Gallic patriotism might yet flare up into renewed widespread fighting, not merely the localized or tribal unrest which Dec. Brutus and Hirtius had to cope with as governors. Plancus had to be a Janus figure, with one face watching out over the enormous expanse of the Gallic countryside and the German-occupied lands farther east and the other turned toward the uncertainties of the struggle at Rome. In the event, there was no large Gallic uprising; he fought only a brief campaign against the Raurici. In the spring of 43 he cautiously moved his army down the Rhone valley, and his march toward Italy were the first steps in a career which over the following twenty-plus years allowed him to influence the course of Roman history.

In this and subsequent chapters, the basic principle is that as far as possible we ought to assess Plancus' role as he saw events at the time and not rely on knowledge of results and condemnations by hostile witnesses. A rather sympathetic, balanced, and it is hoped accurate portrait of Plancus emerges. Thanks to the letters exchanged with Cicero and preserved in the *ad Familiares* supplemented by information in Appian and Dio Cassius, we are quite well informed of Plancus' movements and thoughts from the fall of 44 through the end of 43. These few months are the best recorded period of his life. For the first and only time in his lengthy career he speaks for himself, in a series of eloquent and carefully worded letters.¹ Never again do we have Plancus' own account of his actions.²

Plancus was high in Antony's favor for a decade, 42-32, but we lack the information to assess his duties accurately. After the elimination of Antony, the triumphant Octavian suppressed nearly all pro-Antonian material, some of which would have been informative on Plancus' responsibilities. The loss of

the histories of Pollio and Livy is much to be regretted.³ The years 32–29 are a time of transition, for Rome and for Plancus. Horace’s “Plancus Ode” 1.7 belongs to this period.

The last stage of Plancus’ long career coincides with the establishment of the Augustan Principate. He occupied center stage in 27, when he proposed “Augustus” as the new *cognomen* for Octavian, and in 22, when he was censor. He was more than an actor reciting lines written by another, as he was active in the formulation of policies. Or so it is argued here, for secrecy masked the formulation of major decisions. We cannot know how it came about that Plancus, a new man from municipal Italy, rather than some member of a patrician or at least very noble plebeian family, obtained these signal honors. But if he was only a smooth- talking, time-serving, unprincipled flatterer, he was a very peculiar choice to propose Octavian’s new name. He would disgrace these years which mark the transition of the Roman world from civil wars to the peaceful Principate and of Caesar Octavianus from the devious and ruthless triumvir to the Revered One, chosen by the gods to re-establish the golden age in Italy. The enigma remains: no source answers the question “why Plancus?” The epitaph at Caieta is silent: no mention of his role in 27. The setting receives a fresh analysis in [Chapter 8](#), but we can do no more than speculate. Perhaps, however, a detailed treatment of his career in the years down to 27 points the way to a solution. We begin in the days after the assassination of Caesar.

The amnesty of March 17 and Plancus

When it became apparent that the dictator was to be the only victim, Plancus and the other Caesarians must have felt relieved. Antony as surviving consul assumed control of Rome and worked with Lepidus as Master of the Horse and in command of the one legion in the city to impose order. In a speech to the Senate on March 17, Antony shrewdly argued the wisdom of ratifying all Caesar’s *acta* and granting an amnesty to the assassins. He thereby demonstrated both his intentions not to pursue a vendetta against those whom his allies regarded as murderers, reciprocating their decision not to purge the Caesarians, and his willingness to work out some form of compromise.

Antony pointed out that if the Senate were to declare Caesar’s rule void as obtained through civil war, it ought logically to cancel his *acta* as well, both those already in effect and those still to come into operation. This would cause administrative turmoil all through Italy and the empire and compel many senators to abandon profits from whatever offices they had held, to step down from those they were presently holding (including Antony’s consulship), and

to yield those they expected to hold through Caesar's appointments over the next five years. He knew that few senators, no matter how much they hated Caesar's dictatorship, would curtail their own careers and cede the profits they expected to gain. Cicero spoke in favor of the amnesty and ratification of the *acta*, as did Plancus. Antony's performance, which included elimination of the "pseudo-Marius," impressed most senators, both old Caesarians and the conservatives.⁴

Plancus certainly had good reason to support the decision: it preserved his governorship of Gaul, with its chance for military glory and riches, and his consulship. Antony presumably called on him to speak precisely because he was well known to be a Caesarian loyalist as well as a friend and former pupil of Cicero. Though we do not know what he said, Plancus' remarks must have made an impression, as otherwise they would not have been remembered at all. Some of the other known advocates of the amnesty at that session of the Senate were far senior to him and would have spoken first, notably Cicero (cos. 63) and Caesar's father-in-law L. Calpurnius Piso (cos. 58). One opponent was a former Caesarian, Ti. Claudius Nero.⁵

Proconsul of Gallia Comata: duties and problems

How long Plancus remained in Rome is uncertain, but he probably went to his province as soon as possible. If his predecessor Hirtius departed for Rome with the onset of spring, it was incumbent on the next governor to be on station quickly and not leave the partially pacified Gaul under a temporary substitute (*praepositus*) rather than a full governor.⁶ Traveling alone and not with an army, he could have gone by sea to Massilia (Marseilles) and up the Rhone valley, thus circumventing the passes through the Alps, closed by snow until the late spring. There is little information as to the terms of his appointment. Caesar had designated the provincial governors, and his choices were among the *acta* which Antony had persuaded the Senate to ratify. Since he was only of praetorian rank, Plancus should have held office for one year, but Caesar may have intended him to stay in Gaul through 43 and return to Rome shortly before entering into the consulship on January 1, 42. In any case, the Senate later instructed him to remain in his province until selection of a successor.⁷

Decimus Brutus had fought the Bellovaci in central Gaul in 48–46; Hirtius had won sufficient victories in Gaul to claim the title *imperator* during his governorship in 45 and into 44. In early April Cicero passed on to Atticus the news that Matius was expecting a Gallic uprising in the near future.⁸ The threat quickly subsided, as Hirtius felt a *praepositus*, Aurelius, could be safely left in control pending Plancus' arrival and returned to Italy. Cicero saw

Hirtius at Puteoli on April 21 and simultaneously learned that Gallic and German envoys had promised Aurelius that they would not cause any trouble.⁹ Plancus had a full agenda, even if the Gauls and Germans stayed quiet and the compromise at Rome held, for the integration of Comata into the empire as a regular province was a major task. In any event, in late summer he conducted a campaign along the eastern boundaries of the Gallic lands against Raetia in what is now Switzerland.

Possession of proconsular *imperium* and an army of three legions plus auxiliaries made Plancus a major figure in the political and military maneuvering of these years. Should the fragile compromise of March 17 collapse and fighting erupt, he would inevitably become involved. He increased his force to five legions by recruiting over the winter of 44–43.¹⁰ The recruits must have been native Gauls, along the line of those who formed Legion V *Alaudae* a few years previously, as there were too few Roman citizens in the province to constitute a new legion. On the other hand, his remoteness from the turmoil of Rome gave him the opportunity to analyse dispassionately. Caution proved a valuable asset. Cicero judged Plancus loyal to the *res publica* but lacking in fire and firmness.

Plancus would have used different terms. It made sense to support Antony, for as consul he was the best bet to guarantee the consulship Caesar had reserved for Plancus. The office would enable him to surpass his ancestors with the *dignitas* of *nobilitas*.¹¹ His opinion of Antony is unknown, but in all probability the two were no more than political affiliates who owed much to Caesar. If Antony held a grudge for Plancus' actions in 45 when he threatened to force Antony to pay up for Pompey's mansion, Plancus would have to move carefully. He would certainly want to avoid a too-close association with Decimus Brutus in Cisalpine Gaul, soon to be the open enemy of Antony. On the other hand, old political configurations were out and new ones yet to be formed. The amnesty required the good will of all. Antony and Cicero barely concealed their mutual dislike.¹² Zealous "Liberators," given the chance, might not honor the terms agreed to in the Senate on March 17, just as Cicero in effect renounced his own support for the amnesty. Plancus could have his desires crushed in a tidal wave of anti-Caesarism. All in all, it was a delicate situation, and Plancus had to watch the trends and developments very carefully: wrong steps could cost him everything he hoped for.

Nothing is known of the relations between him and the assassins at this time or earlier. Cicero was soon to make frequent promises to do what he could for Plancus' *dignitas*, but he could not carry the consulship. Decimus Brutus optimistically thought him and Lepidus possible Republicans, but Pollio in Hispania Ulterior held them committed Caesarians.¹³ Doubtless he kept a close watch on both Decimus, his intended consular colleague but one of those

who had turned against Caesar, and M. Aemilius Lepidus, governor of Gallia Narbonensis and Hispania Citerior. To date, the latter was a firm Caesarian and his brother Paullus a recent convert thanks to a liberal dose of Caesarian gold. They were now the heads of the *familia* which had been patrons of the Munatii Planci for well over a century. Plancus' best course of action was to stay in contact with as many influential and knowledgeable people in Rome as possible, gather information from all available sources, including the *acta diurnal* (journal of the Senate's proceedings),¹⁴ and avoid overzealous commitments.

Cicero reduced a complex political situation to stark opposites: he as a senior *consularis* embodied Roman traditions and would lead the *boni* against Antony as he had led them against Catiline twenty years earlier, for Antony was a new Catiline and the embodiment of Caesarian tyranny. Cicero made a fatal error in portraying himself as a new Demosthenes: Rome's crisis was not that of the Athenian democracy three centuries earlier, nor was Antony King Philip II of Macedonia. Cicero sought parallelism and failed to comprehend the situation on its own terms. Another misjudgment, unfair as well as inaccurate, was to treat Hirtius and Pansa, the consuls of 43, as political lightweights.¹⁵ He saw black and white, absolute right and wrong, where others detected varying shades of gray and some right on both sides; and he categorically refused to admit that Caesarians could be moderate or M. Brutus and Cassius excessive. As early as May 44 the apolitical Atticus rebuked Cicero for arguing that Rome's freedom depended on Brutus, and other letters reveal Cicero's scorn for those who, like Hirtius, urged caution.¹⁶

Many senators were reluctant to be swept up into a renewal of war; fighting was always unpredictable and was all the more to be avoided if possible because the combatants were Romans. Men of military experience and cooler passions did not find the unmilitary Cicero persuasive: eloquent and passionate, but not convincing. They were in no hurry to revert to a solution by force of arms. Armies once in motion would be hard to stop. Senators on their benches in the *curia* at Rome might formulate policies, but governors in their provinces would have to implement them. By stalling, the commanders could in effect promote peace. Plancus' reactions reveal his assessment of Cicero's policies: polite responses but a determined disinclination to act which his enemies saw as indecision and waffling – time-serving.

Caution and a preference for negotiation do not connote approval of Antony. Advocacy of the amnesty was sensible and workable, though it required good will on both sides. Let Antony complete his term as consul and then ease him away from Rome and political power, perhaps to a province well away from Italy. He was not inclined to cooperate and wanted Gallia Cisalpina with legions transferred from Macedonia, which was not acceptable to many,

as this left him a threat to Italy and Rome. Caesarians could appease the Liberators by not condemning them, but this necessitated their cooperation as well. Even Favorinus, the passionate follower of Cato, and M. Brutus, regarded civil war as worse than an illegal monarchy.¹⁷ Plancus' advice and deeds harmonize with such a view and put him in line with a number of other senators. Cicero and Octavian did more than Antony to bring on civil war.

Raetian campaign, Colonia Raurica, and early economic activity in Gallia Comata

Plancus' activities in Gaul before September are poorly known, but he would have had plenty to do in the best of circumstances. Caesar's conquest had caused enormous casualties in the 50s, but some Gauls had continued to fight. Decimus Brutus and Hirtius had conducted campaigns in the years before Plancus' arrival.¹⁸ The Gauls and Germans on the whole made good their promise to stay quiet, and this considerably eased Plancus' duties. He conducted a campaign in or beyond the eastern limits of Comata to subjugate the Raurici, a division of the larger Raetian federation located in the lands south up the upper Danube and east of the Sequani and Helvetii. Caesar had never campaigned in this area other than to erect defensive works along the Rhone downstream from Geneva to block the migrating Helvetii in 58, so Plancus may have felt that a demonstration of Roman power was justified – a warning to the tribes to remain at peace as political turmoil plagued Rome across the Alps.

Nothing is known of the campaign, which is recorded only in Plancus' epitaph (*triumph[havit] ex Raetis*) and on the *Fasti Triumphales (ex Gallia)*. The campaign may attest aggression in quest of *gloria* more than military necessity; there are many questionable triumphs in Roman annals. At best we can think in terms of general military surveillance and continuous work to integrate the new province into Rome's empire. News reached Rome by early September and led to a senatorial notice of thanks, an award of a triumph, and the foundation of a colony, Raurica (Augst by Basel), at the bend of the Rhine. Plancus celebrated his work as colonial founder in his epitaph: *in Gallia colonias deduxit Lugudunum* [sic] *et Rauricam*, the plural indicating both *deductions*. The triumph was celebrated on December 29, 43, well over a year after the fighting.

In founding the colony, he was doubtless following a scheme designed by Caesar. Raurica was to be the outermost in a line of three colonies designed to stand guard and provide advance notice of threats by Germans or Helvetii to the new province of Comata, the older Narbonensis, and even to Italy. Roman

colonies had always been primarily military, and these three were to fulfill this traditional role: they were “to cover a likely invasion route from the Rhine ... that is, they were founded with more of an eye on the Germans than the Gauls.”¹⁹ Only one was established during Caesar’s lifetime, Julia Equestris (Nyon), on the northern shore of Lake Geneva, settled by discharged cavalymen. Raurica came next. The third was to be where the Rhone merges with the Saone. Here Plancus founded Lugdunum in the fall of 43, shortly before he left Gaul. Caesar strengthened Roman control of Narbonensis as well: his legate Ti. Claudius Nero reinforced Colonia Narbo with veterans of the Tenth Legion and founded Baeterrae (Beziers) for vets of the Sixth and Arelate (Arles) for men of the Eighth.²⁰ Caesar also extended Latin rights generously in Narbonensis. There was never to be a repeat of the terrifying invasion of the Cimbri and Teutones or the migrations of the Helvetii and Ariovistus’ Germans in 58. In 16–15 Rome annexed the land between the Alps and upper Danube and subsequently organized it as the province of Noricum. Under Augustus or Tiberius a legionary fortress was established at Vindonissa (Windisch) some 25 miles east, which confirms governmental worries about possible invasions while it ended Raurica’s role as a military outpost.

The early years of Raurica are very obscure, and Plancus’ work is known almost entirely from his epitaph; he may have sited the *colonia* to replace the chief town of the Raurici, under modern Basel, and in any case, it may have failed in the turmoil of the late 40s onward. Augustus refounded it ca. 15–10, and perhaps shifted the site a few miles east to the present archaeological park.²¹ According to one view, the town was first known as Colonia Munatia Triumphalis and was colonized by veterans of Caesar’s Ninth Legion. Another interpretation, based on highly fragmentary inscriptional evidence, is that the full title was Colonia Paterna [Munatia Felix (or Copia)] Apollinaris Augusta Emerita Raurica. The words in brackets were soon deleted from the title, and thus public commemoration of Plancus disappeared save for his epitaph.

Caesar (and by extension Plancus) may have had a subsidiary purpose in mind as well. In general, the peoples of eastern and central Gaul were more advanced than those of the north and west. Tribes such as the Aedui, Sequani, and Arverni, whose lands lay close to the borders of rapidly Romanizing Narbonensis, were moving toward elected magistrates with councils and were using a silver coinage based on the Roman *denarius*, with some bronze and a little gold, while the northern tribes retained kings and gold coinage derive from Macedonian philippics. Caesar had accelerated the acceptance of currency compatible with Roman issues by paying his troops with it. The areas of greatest distribution coincide with his winter camps. As had Hirtius before him, Plancus continued and expanded Caesar’s practices, entrusting Gauls of demonstrated personal and tribal loyalty and aptitude with the “responsibility

for raising and paying Gaulish auxiliaries.” This policy underlies the rather vague references in the letters to Cicero and the Senate to the “many Gallic peoples to be strengthened in their loyalty,” “great quantities of auxiliary cavalry and infantry,” and “the leading men of Gaul.”²²

All three colonies lie inside the area of expanding circulation of Roman-style coinage, astride a major trade route to and from Italy via the Alpine passes and three great rivers: the Rhone, Saone, and Rhine. Another route followed the Loire and Seine to central and northern Gaul. Caesar’s campaigns of 58 had opened the Helvetian territory to Roman interests.²³ Plancus’ family, of equestrian standing, had a background in commerce, and he himself may have regarded these colonies as potential agents of economic development as well as military strongpoints against possible incursions by German tribes (perhaps more likely than Gauls).

Vast dumps of discarded Roman amphorae dating from well before Caesar’s wars and continuing long past them reveal Roman trade in wine (reciprocated by the sale of Gallic slaves, minerals, and agricultural produce to the Roman market) give an indication of the extent of mercantile activity all through the rivers of east-central Gaul and along the Rhine valley.²⁴ (Another concentration indicates trade from Narbo down the Garonne toward Tolosa [Toulouse] and Burdigala [Bordeaux]; it is not of concern here.) The deposits of amphorae prove the trade in wine, but there were other objects as well which leave few traces in the archaeological record. There is no sign that Plancus was personally involved in this trade, but the possibility should be kept in mind, especially given that his family is known to have participated in the slave trade, attested by a Munatius Plancus on Delos in the 90s. Raurica was well situated geographically to serve as the point at which cargoes coming overland could be shipped down the Rhine or ferried across into German territories. Lugdunum, founded the next year and discussed in the ensuing chapter, became the nodal point for shipping upriver eastward toward Lake Geneva, northeast up the Saone to the Moselle or northwest along the Loire, short portage to the upper Seine, and on occasion over to the British Channel. Under Augustus and thanks to the work of Agrippa, Lugdunum became the hub of the great network of Roman roads around Gaul.²⁵

Commercial motivation has long been seen as a driving force in other Caesarian colonies, especially Carthage and Corinth (both in 46). Narbo, founded in 118, had quickly developed into an economic strong point, and Caesar strengthened it with a fresh batch of veterans from his Tenth Legion, hence its formal name Narbo Decimanorum. He settled other veterans in several other colonies in Narbonensis, Baeterrae, and Arelate (Beziers and Arles) for certain. The three new colonies – Noviodunum, Raurica, and Lugdunum – occupy strategic locations north and east of Narbonensis, but

Caesar and Plancus were well aware of growing Roman commercial, military, and political interests. Besides, economic growth would strengthen the ties between Rome and the Gallic upper classes as they recovered from the period of conquest. Plancus' success in winning the service of *principes Galliae* and Gallic soldiers to fight in a Roman civil war surely indicates that some Gauls saw that their future lay with Rome.²⁶

Another question pertaining to Plancus' governorship is whether he practiced extortion. His many enemies did not accuse him of this failing; his own letters claim that the province was quiet; and Cicero's letters praise his administration. By itself, this does not prove much, as Cicero was trying to win him over by flattery and praise, and Plancus would hardly boast of how he squeezed the natives: he was no Verres. Velleius says he was guilty of misgovernment at a later stage of his career but says nothing about his term in Gaul,²⁷ and this may be more significant. Velleius hated Plancus and went out of his way to attack him with gross exaggeration and downright falsehood, so his silence about Gaul may mean that he could not find any grounds for indictment. On the other hand, Romans had a loose definition of what constituted permissible conduct in a governor, and Plancus was certainly a wealthy man in his later career. He constructed the Temple of Saturn at Rome from spoils of war (Gaul was the only place where he fought) and decorated the expensive family mausoleum with a sculptured frieze representing Gallic spoils.²⁸

He may have used profits from Gaul to purchase a property near Tibur to which Horace pictures him retiring after a lengthy career away from Italy. That, of course, is conjecture, as we do not know when he came into possession of this property, and it could well have been in the family for many years, acquired by an unattested marriage, or inherited from a relative or friend. An easy alternative view is that Plancus remodeled and expanded a villa he already had.

September–December 44: Cicero appeals, but Plancus judges for himself

Over July and August the settlement of mid-March began to crumble. Octavian's growing following threatened Antony's standing with the Caesarian plebs and soldiers, and the more he moved to retain their support, the more he lost support among the senatorial moderates. On August 1 L. Piso spoke against him in the Senate. Three days later Brutus and Cassius accused Antony of trying to intimidate them.²⁹ They departed eastward, Brutus to Macedonia and Cassius to Syria, and soon began to levy soldiers. Cicero

started to follow but changed his mind and returned to Rome. On September 1 Antony attacked him in a speech and on September 2 Cicero responded with the First Philippic oration, a measured criticism of Antony's actions. Not long thereafter he wrote Plancus and began an exchange of letters that ran to the end of July, twenty-four epistles in about ten months.³⁰ It is a reasonable guess that letters were exchanged before September or after the following July, but there is no evidence; and we do not know Plancus' other correspondents.

Plancus' brother L. Plautius Plancus, then praetor-designate thanks to Caesar, was on a land commission whose actions in April to July 44 were of concern to Cicero and Atticus. The letters to Atticus in these months often mention the commission's operation in the vicinity of Caesar's colony at Buthrotum in Epirus (Butrint). Atticus was worried that he would lose some of his nearby properties. Caesar had exempted them from confiscation and distribution to new settlers, but he was now dead and Antony unreliable. The affair is of concern here only because the commissioners were L. Plautius Plancus and C. Ateius Capito, friends of Cicero. We met Capito in [Chapter 3](#), when in 46 Cicero wrote to Plancus, then with Caesar in Africa, and asked him to intercede with his commander to protect a legacy to Capito. Plautius Plancus appears several times in the letters of 44, and Cicero stresses that he, Atticus, and Plautius Plancus were quite friendly.³¹ Plautius Plancus was soon driven off by the Buthrotans and subsequently seen near his family home, Formiae. Atticus saved his property by reaching an agreement with Antony at Tibur by mid-July.³² Thereafter the matter is lost to sight and Plautius Plancus next appears as praetor in Rome in 43.

The correspondence with Plancus opens at roughly the time Cicero wrote the two essays *de Officiis* and *de Amicitia*, "On Duties" and "On Friendship," and there is some overlap of thought with his letters.³³ In the latter essay Cicero asserts that true friendship, which exists rarely and only between good men, is based on moral excellence and leads to shared interests and a permanent identification of the self and the friend. Political pressures often strain friendship, but true *amici* are in full agreement and work for the good of the state: public life is the great test of *amicitia*.³⁴ In the second half of the essay Cicero argues that pressures of power and success do not corrupt true friends. A friend neither engages in nor is susceptible to the various forms of flattery and pretense. Those evils are characteristic of fickle and devious people who seek empty honors (*vanitas*) by courting the favor of those in power.³⁵

Though in the form of a dialogue set eighty-five years earlier, the *de Amicitia* reflects Cicero's personal concerns at the time of composition and is not merely an idealized and philosophical analysis.³⁶ The imagined conversations of the dialogue are relevant to the political crisis at Rome in the months after Caesar's death, and much of what Cicero says about politics

being the testing ground for *amicitia* and that true *amici* see eye-to-eye and place the public good above all else mirrors appeals in his letters to Plancus. The first five sections inform readers that Laelius Sapiens taught his sons-in-law Mucius Scaevola Augur and Fannius about the *amicitia* between himself and the recently deceased Scipio Aemilianus, and that years later Scaevola repeated the conversation in 88 to his pupil Cicero and *pauci familiares*. Perhaps those “few close friends” included Scaevola’s son-in-law L. Crassus, who was one of Cicero’s teachers and heroes. Laelius’ teaching supposedly occurred in the turmoil after the deaths of Ti. Gracchus and Scipio Aemilianus (133–129), while Scaevola’s repetition of it came in the troubles of 88, the conclusion of the Social War, and the riotous tribunate of P. Sulpicius Rufus. Maintaining the fiction of wisdom inherited from Rome’s great men of the past, Cicero now in 44 instructs a new generation in the critical period after the death of Caesar when Antony threatens the state. True friends, who are also *boni* and true patriots, rally to the support of the *res publica* in its latest time of need.

In letters to the new proconsul of Gaul, Cicero tried to make the friendship with Plancus into the sort he so admired in the *de Amicitia*, stronger than it apparently was in reality. The chain of teaching and guidance runs from Scipio Aemilianus and Laelius to Mucius Scaevola to L. Crassus to Cicero to Plancus. Cicero never set out the origins of their friendship but instead spoke of *necessitudo* and *amor* which are deeper than *amicitia*. Cicero says we are long-standing friends: I was close to your father and have been your teacher since you were a boy, and we have similar intellectual tastes. *Therefore*, we cannot differ in politics. Your *officium* is to do what I expect, as pupils have followed wise teachers for generations. Follow me and adhere to my concept of the *res publica*. Plancus had a somewhat different outlook, as he realized that the current crisis was not like its predecessors and a solution required a different approach, but he readily admitted the close personal tie. Cicero never read “between the lines” of Plancus’ eloquent epistles.

How much contact Cicero had had with Plancus since the only known previous letter two and a half years prior is uncertain. The absence of letters may not be of great significance, for both had been in and around Rome since Plancus’ (assumed) return from the African campaign in 46, so there had been plenty of opportunities for personal visits. It may be noteworthy that when Cicero wrote independently to Plancus and L. Plautius Plancus in 44 he never referred to contacts with the other. He stressed the family bonds (*paterna necessitudo*), but made no allusions to anyone else in the family, wives or children. We might expect something like “I hear your brother is doing wonderfully in Gaul” in a letter to Plautius Plancus, or “your brother has been a real help to Atticus and me in this sticky affair at Buthrotum” in one to

Plancus in Gaul.

There are a few references in 43. The tone of the letter to Plancus in 44 is stiffer than that of its predecessor in 46. Perhaps the once-warm relationship had cooled because of Plancus' loyalty to Caesar. Plancus and Cicero had been moving in opposite directions politically in the last few years, so a cooling of their affection is only to be expected. In September Cicero seems to have been resolved to rekindle the embers of the old friendship. The task required delicate wording, and the difficulty may underlie the tone of the letter. After all, close friends ought not feel compelled to stress the closeness.

The writer recalls the *amor* he has had with Plancus since his *pueritia* and promises to further his *dignitas* and *amplitudo* (rank and distinction), that is to say, to help further his political career. Cicero adopts the tone of a former teacher and political leader and assumes that Plancus is not a committed follower of Antony, whose *immanitas* and *arma* ([monstrous] hugeness and military strength) threaten the state. Plancus' consulship will be its salvation; left unsaid is that it will be in tandem with the assassin Decimus Brutus. As the *res publica* in its time of need shortly before summoned Cicero home from his thought of flight to the East, so now it summons Plancus from his province (and "home" from wayward Caesarism as well). *Amici* assist one another in their careers and work together for the well-being of the state. Cicero was correct that Plancus at this stage was not a committed Antonian, but few agreed with him that Antony put the very existence of the state in peril.

Cicero wrote another letter after a session of the Senate on September 19. Again the tone is rather stiff, as Cicero sought to justify his failure to support a decree of the Senate honoring Plancus' military operations. The nature of his campaign is unknown, but when he returned to Rome in 43 he celebrated a triumph. More to the point, Cicero evidently felt it too dangerous to appear in the House while Antony had armed soldiers all around, as he explained in a letter to Cassius written about the same time.³⁷ Rather lamely, he promised to help Plancus' career in private. Shortly afterwards Cicero wrote a lengthy letter to Matius in which he stressed how Matius had helped him stay on good terms with Caesar from the 50s through the hard times of the civil war, and Cicero gushed over claims of friendship.³⁸ Elsewhere Cicero greeted Decimus Brutus as *imperator*, a title Brutus claimed for a campaign along the southern slopes of the Alps.³⁹ Plancus had been at least as occupied against the tribes north of the mountains, but Cicero says nothing about this. Plancus' report to the Senate came in December, carried by his legate Furnius, so Cicero may not have known of his victories. Even so, the silence in a man given to fulsome flattery when he saw fit is another indication of a certain coolness between him and Plancus.

We do not know how quickly or thoroughly Plancus was informed about

developments in Italy, but what he discovered piecemeal belatedly affected his actions. In October Octavian may have tried to assassinate Antony.⁴⁰ The next month he began illegally raising troops among Caesar's veterans. Cicero saw the opportunity to become Rome's senior statesman and savior of the state, as he had been in 63. In short, he could be the *rector* or *gubernator*, the heroic figure envisioned a few years earlier in *de Republica*. He strove to isolate Antony and attach Octavian to the Senate, with the intention of removing him once his usefulness had been consumed. Antony in the meantime had secured passage of a law giving him the legions stationed in Macedonia and the governorship of Cisalpine Gaul,⁴¹ a highly provocative move among all who still wanted to avoid war. Caesar himself had assigned Cisalpina to Decimus, so Antony was subverting a portion of the very *acta Caesaris* he had agreed to preserve on March 17. Antony, with an army of veteran legions in a position from which he could strike at Rome, was not a pleasing prospect for all who still strove to preserve the peace, a prospect which was rapidly fading away.

Even Caesarians senators are likely to have regarded Antony's actions as dangerous. Plancus' assessment is not known, and he may never have written it down. The incoming consuls Hirtius and Pansa, both Caesarian appointees, distanced themselves from Antony's policies when they took office. Their goal was an alternative which allowed Antony to keep his legions but moved them and him farther from Rome. As will become apparent, Plancus was evidently willing to go along with this last-minute and rather desperate plan.

Decimus Brutus refused to cede his province to Antony, as his appointment was valid even if made by the man he had helped murder. He was unwilling to return to private life when Antony and other Caesarian loyalists were to hold the top offices of state and holed up in Mutina (Modena). By the late fall, Rome was on the edge of civil war. The vicious Second Philippic began circulating in November. Cicero's praise of the assassins may have disturbed moderate Caesarians and Republicans alike, as it abolished the compromise of March. For his part, Antony left Rome to pick up the legions which had crossed the Adriatic to Brundisium and then set out to force Decimus to yield Cisalpina to him.⁴² War was now a virtual certainty; the only hope was that it could be limited to Antony vs. Brutus and not encompass the whole empire. If Lepidus, Pollio, and Plancus would march into Italy, Antony could be eliminated and Brutus saved.

Cicero's fourth letter, written in mid-December, is less formal than its predecessors. Plancus' legate C. Furnius, a mutual friend, had come to Rome with a full report of his commander's activities and likely a private message for Cicero. Furnius looks to have helped restore the old friendship.⁴³ Cicero recalls the *necessitudo* with Plancus' *domus* (perhaps more persons than just Plancus), the *amor* for Plancus since his *pueritia*, and Plancus' *ingenium*

industriique (application of his talents). Then Cicero ventures to render advice to his old pupil. Others – not the writer! – have thought Plancus “*nimis servire temporibus*.” The opportunity to disprove them is at hand. He should follow the “*unus ... cursus ad gloriam*,” implied rather than stated: employ his army against Antony, just as Cicero had been urging Decimus to do. Now Brutus was under siege and Cicero’s sense of urgency was increasing as the crisis deepened. He delivered the Third and Fourth Philippics on December 20 (to the Senate, then to the people at large) and was likely framing his arguments when he wrote Plancus.

Plancus’ response to Cicero answered Cicero’s third to him, by mid-December, elegant as expected from a polished stylist.⁴⁴ There is no sign of any previous epistle, and he may have been fully occupied working at the pacification of the Raeti and the foundation of Colonia Raurica.⁴⁵ On the basis of this war Plancus received a triumph, The appellation *imperator* is in the prescript to the communiqué to SPQR in the middle of March 43.⁴⁶ The triumph itself was in late December 43 and is noted in the *Fasti Triumphales* at Rome and the epitaph at Caieta. The letter of December provides the first opportunity to speculate on his activities as governor and his political outlook with regard to the deteriorating situation in Italy.

The letter is at first sight disappointing, and it is tempting to dismiss it and the others from him as elegant nothingness. It certainly lacks the nobility expressed by Matius at about this time, the most high-minded of correspondents in the entire Ciceronian corpus. Plancus’ missive can fairly be compared with two from Pollio in March 43.⁴⁷ Matius may indeed have had higher principles, but he was not in public life and had little reason to fear the consequences of his past loyalty; he had never profited politically or financially, or so he asserted. Plancus had to be more careful, for his career to date had doubtless stirred up much jealousy, and a consulship and the glory of a triumph were almost within his grasp. The tumult of civil war or the establishment of his opponents in power could sweep him away in an avalanche of reactionary republicanism.

Read from a different perspective, moreover, Plancus’ letter can be seen as a politely worded disagreement with Cicero. Subtly Plancus stated that he would follow his own counsel. Much as they valued Cicero’s friendship, Matius and Plancus let the great orator know that they found his policies misguided and simplistic. One may compare the frank comments of M. Brutus in the spring of 43.⁴⁸ Cicero failed to grasp the implications; he was never very good at taking hints. Convinced of his own correctness and righteousness, he plunged ahead in pursuit of a policy which ultimately proved fatal.

Plancus apologized for not having written (at all, or just more frequently?), but said that he had only recently learned of Cicero’s departure from Rome

and subsequent return. Cicero's abortive journey had been in August, so Plancus seems not to have been well informed about events in Rome for several months. The lack of up-to-date information about the course of events in Rome may well coincide with his campaign against the Raurici. He echoed the tone of Cicero's most recent letter, just as it had repeated the sentiments of that written in 46. As Cicero had spoken of the *paterna necessitudo* between their *domus*, *amor* since Plancus' *pueritia*, *familiaritas*, and their common *vinculum studiorum et artium*, so now Plancus turned on the charm: "I cannot omit the slightest *officium in te* without feeling very guilty ... because of *paterna necessitudo*, my attachment you *a pueritia*, and your *amor* for me. Wherefore, my Cicero ... I have determined to regard you alone with *patria sanctitas*; and your counsels are so full of *prudencia* and *fidelitas* that they would check my contrary impulses (if I had any) and encourage me to follow the course you think best." This is not quite the same as saying he *will* do what Cicero wants. Plancus admits that he lacks *bona fama*.

He assured Cicero that his *vis* (zeal or force [and army?]), *consilium*, and *auctoritas* would be available for the *res publica* – though (we can interpret) not necessarily Cicero's conception of it. Plancus wished Cicero was with him; if he were, he would have no grounds for complaint. The real message may have been that Plancus would preserve him from the predictable consequences of his oratorical excesses: Plancus foresaw the likely outcome of Cicero's narrow perception of a very complicated situation. In closing, Plancus stressed his anxiety about what will happen in January and his concern that the Gauls might take advantage of Rome's distractions to stir up troubles: a convenient justification for keeping his army where it was.

A middle position, advocacy of some sort of compromise, was doubtless difficult to maintain, for persons of strong opinions always label those in the middle as fence-sitters or time-servers, thumb-twiddling do-nothings who wait to see which way the wind is blowing and commit themselves only when certain of which side will be victorious. Plancus was not the only one who hesitated to be candid to Cicero. We do not know whether there was any clear consensus among senators. Most had friends and contacts on both sides. Winds of political turmoil swirl rather than blow straight.

Matius openly admitted that he had followed Caesar as a friend without condoning all that Caesar did and regarded the assassins as ingrates and murderers. Caesar had spared the lives of many of them in the civil war, and they had justified turning against him by claiming the lofty principle of tyrannicide. Matius rejected this as hypocrisy; Pollio was equally critical of others while defending himself.⁴⁹ Hirtius also tried to hold to a middle course. He disapproved of Antony's actions but was equally wary of the Liberators' passionate idealism. Plancus' opinions were close to those of Matius, Pollio,

and Hirtius.⁵⁰

Plancus next wrote to Cicero in mid-to-late March 43, enclosing a personal letter with a dispatch to SPQR. We will address the situation in Italy in the next chapter, as it was greatly changed from December. The dispatch alludes to the strenuous and successful efforts as governor to build up the loyalty of the Gallic tribes, notably to get them to supply auxiliary soldiers. In December 43 Cicero persuaded the Senate to recognize Plancus and Dec. Brutus as *imperatores*.⁵¹ Plancus had probably set out to win Gallic allegiance not long after becoming governor and kept up these efforts the entire time he was in office, though by the spring of 43 he was mostly otherwise occupied and development of Gallia Comata was shoved aside. By late April 43 he was slowly leading his troops down the Rhone valley to deal with Antony and giving nearly all his attention to the civil war, the topic of the next chapter. But first, let us see what is known of his acts as proconsul of Gallia Comata.

The rush to war: late fall and early winter, 44

By the time Plancus responded to Cicero, probably at the conclusion of the Raetian war, Rome was sliding inexorably toward open warfare.⁵² Hope for a peaceful settlement was slim once Antony opened the fighting by besieging Dec. Brutus at Mutina in December. Something might still be worked out while winter weather kept military operations to a minimum, and a number of senators continued to promote negotiations. Dead set against any compromise which would leave Antony with either power or *dignitas*, Cicero led the charge to war.⁵³ The winter of 44–43 proved crucial.

No letters to Atticus are preserved after the middle of November 44, so we no longer have the almost daily expressions of his private thoughts that Cicero customarily made to his closest friend. His public opinions are clear in a series of letters written in late 44 to bolster three of the western governors: Plancus in Comata, Dec. Brutus in Cisalpina, and Q. Cornificius in Africa.⁵⁴ Cicero presumably also wrote appeals to Lepidus in Narbonensis and Hispania Citerior and Pollio in Hispania Ulterior, but they have been lost. His message is constant and consonant with what he spoke in the Third and Fourth Philippics (December 20). There are three letters to Decimus Brutus, appealing to his sense of pride and *dignitas* by addressing him as *imperator* and consul-designate. Brutus had already labelled himself *imp., cos. desig.* to Cicero. The tone to Plancus is far less formal, indicating their old friendship. Cicero omitted *imperator* but did use consul-designate in the body of the letter. He styled them together as *consules designati* in the Third Philippic to the Senate. Cicero was not as close to Brutus as to Plancus and felt that he ought to use

formally correct language to a member of the nobility, but he did not need to do so to an old personal friend. Plancus omitted his titles when writing Cicero but used them in formal communication with the Senate.⁵⁵

Cicero called on Decimus to complete the liberation of the Roman people by eliminating Antony. The prayers of SPQR, joined by those of Cicero, are that “you might free the state from regal tyranny” (*dominatus*). In return, Cicero promised to employ all his duties, desires, cares, and thought to increase Brutus’ praise, glory, and *dignitas*. Brutus need not wait for “the authorization of the Senate, which is not yet free” to preserve the “freedom and well-being of the Roman people” any more than he did in assassinating Caesar.⁵⁶ Cicero told Plancus, on the other hand, that now is the opportunity to disprove those who think he “excessively goes with the times,” whereas he had encouraged Brutus to continue what he had begun. “Grasp that concern and attitude which will confer upon you the highest *dignitas* and *gloria*.” There is only “one path to glory.” In return, Cicero says “I will zealously and diligently pursue those things which I think pertain to your *dignitas*.”⁵⁷

Now turn to the third and fourth Philippic orations. All through them runs the theme that Antony has made himself a public enemy (*hostis*) by his deeds even if the Senate has not yet made him one at law by formal decree.⁵⁸ In the present emergency, the law is a mere formality! The Senate need not wait until the new consuls Hirtius and Pansa begin their term before taking official action – every day counts! No right-minded person recognizes Antony as consul: Octavian, only an *adulescens*, has acted on his own initiative, and legions IV and Martia have gone over to him. Brutus has refused to cede Cisalpine Gaul to Antony, and the people of the province are with him. Antony comes out the worse in a comparison with King Tarquin of legend, whom an ancestor of Dec. Brutus expelled.⁵⁹ In the letter to him, Cicero invited Decimus to free Rome from a *dominatus regius*. Cicero was blithely unaware that Decimus, tightly under siege and short on rations with untrained troops, was in no position to do anything against the proven general Antony. The caution of Plancus, Lepidus, and Pollio matches that of the Senate and stands in contrast with the boldness and illegality of Octavian, Brutus, and the legions.

Cicero called for action and predicted Antony’s ruin if he entered Cisalpine Gaul where he would be attacked on all sides. He was at least trying to create the impression that Plancus was on the point of joining his crusade, as the motion proposed at the end of the speech mentions him by name, with the incoming consuls and his intended colleague for 42.⁶⁰ This motion thus confirmed Plancus’ consulship and governorship and backed up Cicero’s promise to work for his *dignitas*.⁶¹ Cicero did not mention by name the other western governors. Was he unsure of their inclinations, not worried about

them, or was he simply specifying the next two pairs of consuls – the incoming Hirtius and Pansa for 43 and their successors Dec. Brutus and Plancus for 42? Cicero's line of thought continued in Philippics 10–12, delivered in February and early March.

Not only did those who, like Pollio and Plancus, were still aspiring to the highest office advocate caution. So also did the senior consuls of 58, 56, and 51, L. Calpurnius Piso (Caesar's father-in-law), L. Marcius Philippus (stepfather of Octavian), and Ser. Sulpicius Rufus. All were Caesarians to one degree or another, and none wanted war. Cicero needed all his oratorical powers to overcome widespread differences of opinion and reluctance to renew civil strife. Antony lacked support because of his unpredictable tendencies toward disgraceful conduct, in other words, disapproval of his person as much as his politics; but everyone admitted his competence as a commander. Relatively few were eager to engage one of Caesar's former chief lieutenants in open warfare.

To more carefully and deliberately, to adjust one's position as others altered theirs, to be flexible, to avoid rash statements and acts that could not be corrected – in short, to exhibit *dissimulation* was natural and wise. However, precisely this caution is what persons of rigidly partisan outlook characterized as *nimis servire temporibus*. Thus we see another shade of meaning for the term: a scornful sneer against a person speaking and acting carefully. We would like to have the names of those who regarded Plancus as a time-server and what they meant by it. It looks like the kind of charge that members of the prominent families who had for so long controlled Roman political life levied against any *novi* or disgruntled members of their own class who owed their prominence to Caesar's patronage rather than to the traditional electoral alliances in which they had little chance of winning the top offices. Plancus seems no more guilty of "going with the times" than Hirtius, Pansa, and Pollio: all owed their rise to Caesar. But this does not make them any less concerned for the welfare of Rome.⁶²

In March, 43 Cicero will tell Plancus that so far he has won "the greatest degrees of *dignitas*" by using "the links of convenience (*vincla temporum*)," not his judgment. All will be mere words void of substance, not marks of true rank, unless he attached himself to the freedom of the Roman people and the *auctoritas* of the Senate. Many have been consuls in name, but no one is a real consul unless he acts and counsels for the good of the state.⁶³ In essence, Cicero summoned the *novus* Plancus to be a true *nobilis* by using his *ingenium industriaque*: these are the characteristics of the true Ciceronian *bonus* – as the *novus* Cicero had argued for years.⁶⁴ This is hardly a fair summary of Plancus and others like him, but Cicero was desperate: winter was ending and the spring fighting season was at hand, so he was in a hurry to get his coalition of

anti-Antonians together and on the move with their armies.

The question of legality may have counted for much. Only a few years earlier Cicero had fumed against Caesar for ignoring constitutional proprieties. Now he was advocating that Plancus and others should take up arms against Antony. In 44, Antony was consul and in the spring he had acted in a statesmanlike manner with the amnesty of March 17 and a willingness to work out a compromise, until Octavian slyly worked to steal the basis of his support. That amnesty had preserved the careers of many senators. Continuing negotiations in an effort to work out some form of compromise was only sensible, and few were in a hurry to follow Cicero's oratory and some vague higher law in preference to statutes they had themselves enacted. In a purely practical consideration, none of Caesar's former legates had Antony's reputation as a battlefield commander, and they were wary of tackling him head-on. Plancus and his colleagues had learned from Caesar that "a commander overcomes his enemies no less by planning than by the sword."⁶⁵

Notes

- 1 In book 10 of *ad Fam.*; note 10.3.3 = SB 355, the basis of frequent condemnation. Jullien is more balanced: 1892, 38–91; Carter 1970, 43, 75–59; see also Audin 1965, 34, 60. A sample of the hostile verdicts: W.E. Heitland, *The Roman Republic* (Cambridge, 1909; rpt. New York, 1969), 3.395 ("a rogue, caring only for his own advantage"); Syme 1939, esp. 109–11, 158 ("the reverse of a bellicose character ... well-timed treacheries"), 179–80; Carcopino 1951 (rpt.1969), 511–25 *passim* ("comedy-actor traitor," "light-hearted traitor," whose correspondence "sweats treason from every pore," "a despicable character"); Bliss 1960, 37–40 speaks of "a peculiar weakness of character" and judges Plancus "the sort of man whom conscience makes a coward."
- 2 With the exception of the few words of his *elogium* at Caieta and his retort to Pollio, "*cum mortuis non nisi larvas luctari*," "only ghosts fight with the dead" (Pliny, *NH* praef. 31).
- 3 Suetonius preserves a few bits of Antony's writings: *Aug.* 4.2; 68–70. The speeches in Appian (2.137–46) and Dio (44.36–49) are the writers' compositions, not Antony's. On Pollio: Bosworth 1972, 441–54; as a source for Plutarch, Appian, and Dio, see Pelling 1988, 27–8, 32; and 1986, 159–87.
- 4 App. 2.111–42; 3.2–8 ("pseudo-Marius"); Dio 44.17–44, esp. 25–30; Plut., *Brut.* 19 for Cicero and Plancus; cf. *Cic.* 42.3; *Ant.* 14; *Caes.* 63–6. The few references to Plancus in Mitchell 1991 chap.7, 289–97, 308, 310, 322 are unsympathetic; his analysis of Cicero's attitude toward former Caesarians who were also his personal friends does not include Plancus.
- 5 App. 2.136. In 127 he leaves the speakers unnamed, so as not to detract from Antony's speech at 128; 132 for a speech of Dolabella about himself. Cf. Dio 44.22.3 and Cicero's speech in 23–33; 34.4–5 for Lepidus. Suet., *Tib.* 4.1 for the opposition of Nero, who favored rewarding the tyrannicides.
- 6 Nothing came of Antony's proposal to become governor of Gallia Comata (in early 43?) and retain the six legions from Macedonia: *Att.* 14.14.1 and 15.4 = SB 368, 381; not in Plutarch, Appian, or Dio. It would have required Plancus to relinquish his governorship to

- Antony and be without any official standing until he became consul.
- 7 *MRR* 2.329; Dio 43.25.3; *Phil.* 3.38 for the Senate's instructions. Hirtius had been of praetorian standing when governor for over a year; Dec. Brutus was governor in 48–6: *MRR* 2.281, 301, 309.
 - 8 Brutus: Livy, *Per.* 114; App. 2.48, 111. Rumors: *Att.* 14.1 and 4 = SB 355, 358. Wightman 1985, 44 for coins reading IMP[erator].
 - 9 *Att.*, 14.9.3 and 11.3 = SB 363, 365. Aurelius is unknown; if a member of the Aurelii Cottae, he was related to Caesar's mother.
 - 10 App. 3.46: three legions in 44 and anticipatory with regard to Plancus' inclinations. Five legions by March 43 (*Fam.* 10.8.4, 6 = SB 371). On July 28, 43, he reported an army of three veteran legions and one of recruits (10.24.3 = SB 429). Keppie 1984, 113 fig. 33 shows three legions in Comata, two in Transalpina (= Narbonensis), and two in Cisalpina. See also Brunt 1971, 477–79.
 - 11 See App. 2.128–29 and 133; Wiseman 1971, 166–67.
 - 12 See *Phil.* 1.2–5, 32f.; *Att.* 14.13 A–B = SB 367 A–B. Cicero's real feelings emerge in letters to Atticus, as 14.14; cf. 14.5–6 = SV 359, 368. See also Stockton 1971, 282; Huzar 1978, 83, 92 with note 21 on 285.
 - 13 *Fam.* 10.1.2 = SB 380.
 - 14 *Fam.* 10.1.2 = SB 340; cf. *Fam.* 12.9.1 = SB 421. Journal: Talbert 1984, esp. 308–23.
 - 15 Wooten 1983 follows Cicero in oversimplifying the struggle of 44–3. Cf. Syme 1939, 144, 146. On Hirtius and Pansa: *Fam.* 16.27 = SB 352; *Att.* 14.21; 15.1; 15.5 and 16.1.4 = SB 375, 379, 383, 409.
 - 16 *Att.* 14.29 = SB 375 (May, 44); cf. 14.14 = SB 368 in late April; 15.1 = SB 377; 15.6 = SB 386 in June.
 - 17 Plut., *Brut.* 12.3.
 - 18 Pliny, *NH* 7.92 and Plut., *Caes.* 15: a million dead. See also Badian 1968, 89–91 (“the greatest brigand of them all”); and Drinkwater 1983, 15–20.
 - 19 Drinkwater 1983, 19.
 - 20 *Tiberius* 4. Nero switched allegiance in 44 but was pardoned and returned to Italy only in 39. He became the father of the subsequent emperor Tiberius in 42. See Barrett, 2002, 19–28 for his marriage to Livia whom he had to yield to Octavian in 38.
 - 21 See Isaac 1971, arguing for Munatia Triumphalis and veteran colonists from Caesar's Ninth Legion, and Berger 1998, who makes the case for “Emerita” but without speculating as to the legion which supplied the colonists. The epigraphic evidence for the colonial title is not entirely convincing as the bronze lettering on statue bases – one to the colonial namer (*nuncupator*), the other to *Imp. Caesar Divi Iuli f. Augustus* as *conditor* – is extensively restored: see Berger, figure 2 a and b. The reconstruction drawings show “Munatia Felix” excised. “Augusta” is known from a milestone of 139 found in 1975 and from Ptolemy, *Augusta Raurikon*.
 - 22 *Fam.* 10.8.3, 6; 10.21.5; 11.13A = SB 371, 391, 418. Quote: Wightman 1977a, 120; see generally 117–25 and her 1977 paper, 75–85, with the map on 85 showing the overlap between Caesar's winter quarters and the circulation of silver coinage; also 1985, 44, 47; and Drinkwater 1983, 120–21. Cicero's vague praise is *Fam.* 10.1.1 = SB 355.
 - 23 *Caes.*, *BG* 3.1–6; cf. 1.10.4. The Alpine Salassi caused troubles for another twenty years, and Augustus founded the colony of Augusta Praetoria (Aosta) in 25 to guard the Italian side of the Alps: see Pliny, *NH* 3.123; Strabo 4.6.7; Dio 53.23; van Royen, *Talanta* 5 (1973). Decimus

- Brutus waged a campaign in the Alps: *Fam.* 11.4.6, 5, 7 = SB 342f., 353f.; Strabo 4.1.2 and 6.11.
- 24 See Peacock and Williams 1986, 24–5, 54–6; Peacock 1982, 146–57 esp. 152.
- 25 Wightman 1985, 49–50; Drinkwater 1983, 124–25, 258.
- 26 Discontent remained, as the revolts of 20–1 and 69–70 AD demonstrate. See Woolf 1998 for the gradual process whereby the leading men of Gaul, ambitious for success in the Roman Empire, steadily adopted Roman ways and were slowly followed by the lower elements of society.
- 27 *Fam.* 10.3 = SB 355; Vell. 2.83.2, to be compared with 63.2 and 67.2.
- 28 See Shatzman 1975, 63–7 for the opportunities to gain wealth; Plancus in note 45. *Manubiae*, which Plancus used to fund the Temple of Saturn, was “that part of the booty which the commander took for himself. He was entitled to use it for his personal needs, though many commanders used it for public projects. He could apportion it among his men and officers as he saw fit and did not have to make an official report to the Senate” (63); also Shatzman 1972, 177–205, esp. 186; Nicolet 1980, 117–20. The temple (the standing remains of which are mostly from a late AD third-century restoration after a fire) has been variously dated to 42 or the 20s. See Chapter 8 and the Epilogue.
- 29 Piso: *Phil.* 1.10, 14. Brutus and Cassius: *Fam.* 11.3 = SB 336. See Frisch 1946, 116. Some praised Piso, but his speech had little effect, *Att.* 16.7 = SB 415.
- 30 *Fam.* 10.1 = SB 340. Walzer’s commentary on occasion differs somewhat from Shackleton Bailey’s; I will note only significant discrepancies. Cicero steadily appeals to Plancus’ sense of duty, to the obligation to live up to the expectations of his social class. See MacMullen 1980 (rpt. 1990), 13–24.
- 31 The most important letters are *Att.* 15.27.3; 16.16A, B, C, E; cf. 4.17.4 = SB 406–07 and 93. See *MRR* 2.232 and Shackleton Bailey’s commentary. Plautius Plancus’ career: Sumner 1971, 366 n. 55 (born in 83); Wiseman 1971, 252 no. 328; Crawford 1974, 468; no. 453 plate LIII no 23. Dio 43.51.3ff.: praetor. Capito’s legacy: *Fam.* 13.29 = SB 282.
- 32 *Att.* 15.29.3; 16.1.2; 16.4.3; 16.3 = SB 408, 409, 411, 413.
- 33 *De Div.* 2.3 lists Cicero’s works to date and includes the *de Senectute* of that year (*Att.* 14.2 = SB 375, May 11, 44), but not the *de Amicitia*. *De Off.* 2.31 alludes to it in 44. In *Att.* 16.13A = SB 424 of November Cicero inquires about the date when C. Fannius was tribune: since he was a participant in the *de Amicitia*, the essay was well underway by that time.
- 34 Moral excellence of *boni*: secs, 15–21, 62, 65, 79, 104. True friends as selves and allies: 22f., 32–44, 100–04.
- 35 *Imperium, potestas, prospere res*: 54–5, 64–5. *Blanditia, adulatio, assentatio, simulatio* of *vulgares, leves et fallaces homines* seeking *vanitas*: 74, 91–5.
- 36 See Brunt 1989, 351–91 for the range of meaning of *amicitia*; political context at 367–70; 380 for the “priority of duty to the commonwealth.” Brunt shows Cicero’s propensity to use favorable words in writing or when speaking publicly about a person but negative in private; as examples. M Crassus, Ap. Claudius, Fufius Calenus, Caesar, and Antony; note 73 remarks Cicero was “ostensibly cordial” toward Plancus. Leach 1993 argues that Cicero’s intensely political life led him to develop as “civic contextualization” of friendship, and he hoped his friends would love the *res publica* as he did.
- 37 *Fam.* 10.2 = SB 341, to Plancus; and 12.2 = SB 344, to Cassius.
- 38 *Fam.* 11.27 = SB 348, mid-October. “Hypocrisy toward leading Caesarians seems to have become [Cicero’s] inveterate habit” (*Comm.* 2.486). See Brunt 1989, 379–80 for Matius and Cicero.

- 39 *Fam.* 11.6.4; 5 and 7 = SB 343, 342, 353 and 354. These two letters invite Decimus to use force against Antony without waiting for authorization – another serious error in Cicero’s thinking, the devotee of Roman traditions advocating extra-legal military action. Brutus’ campaigns are not otherwise known, and, while justifiable, did not guarantee the safety of Transpadane Gaul.
- 40 App. 3.39; Sen., *de Clem.* 1.9.1; Suet., *Aug.* 10.3; *Fam.* 12.23 = SB 347.
- 41 Livy, *Per.* 116; Cic., *Phil.* 5.7. Cicero’s plans are sprinkled through his letters and orations: see esp. *Att.* 16.11 and 16 = SB 420, 426. For the famous quip that Octavian “*laudandum, ornandum, tollendum*,” see *Fam.* 11.20 = SB 401; Suet., *Aug.* 12; Vell. 2.67.6. Dio reports (45.14–15) an improbable proposal of Octavian to ally with Decimus Brutus against Antony. See Bellen 1985, 161–89 for an analysis of the great orator’s contributions to, and influence on, Octavian – who only acknowledged them years later when Augustus.
- 42 *Phil.* 2.25–34; cf. *Att.* 15.13 and 16.11 = SB 416, 420. Huzar 1978, 19–20, 55–6, 81–120.
- 43 *Fam.* 10.3 = SB 355. Shackleton Bailey dates this letter to after December 9; Walzer puts it two months earlier, which is improbable since Plancus was likely still in the field against the Gauls in October. Furnius is of some interest on his own: Wiseman 1971, 233 no. 190; Treggiari 1973, 250–55 points out that Cicero and Horace knew Furnius and Plancus.
- 44 *Fam.* 10.4 = SB 358. Shackleton Bailey’s date: mid-to-late December; Walzer’s date is November.
- 45 His movements are not traceable until April 43. The views of Isaac 1971 and Berger 1998 are discussed earlier. Plancus would not have boasted on his epitaph of founding a colony that was completely defunct. For the background to his later foundation of Lugdunum, see later and Wells 1972.
- 46 *Fam.* 10.9 = SB 371. The epitaph claims he was twice *imperator*; the second occasion is not known, and the problems are discussed in Chapter 6.
- 47 *Fam.* 11.28 and 10.31 = SB 347, 368.
- 48 *Ad M. Brutum* 11 (1.4), 12 (1.4A) and 24 = SB 10, 11, 25.
- 49 Matius does not specify which of Caesar’s policies he disliked, probably the start of the civil war or, more generally, the drift toward autocracy.
- 50 Cicero thought Hirtius insufficiently republican: *Att.* 15.6 = SB 386 (June, 44), doubting he had the *auctoritas* to do as Brutus and Cassius wanted and make him *melior*. Cicero passed on to Atticus a letter from Hirtius, who hoped Cicero could restrain Brutus and Cassius. A more positive evaluation of Hirtius emerged in 43: *Att.* 16.14 = SB 409 and *Fam.* 16.27 = SB 352.
- 51 *Fam.* 10.8.3 = SB 371. See the later 10.21.5 = SB 391, “a great number of auxiliaries and leading men of Gaul”; 10.13 = SB 418, Allobrogian cavalry; 10.26.4 = SB 424 to Furnius for the Gauls’ zeal. *Imperatores: Phil.* 3.38.
- 52 *Fam.* 10.4 = SB 358, a reply to 10.3 = SB 355.
- 53 Rawson 1975b, 278–80. The period from December 44 onward was “the heroic period of Cicero’s career, his *aristeia* as the Greeks would term it.” There was a flood of letters, but all are semi-official and lack the intimacy of earlier times and to Atticus: “to a remarkable degree Cicero was now the real ruler of Rome.” This is an overstatement; all politicians were writing furiously to justify their actions, to persuade others, and to learn of events; only the tiniest quantity of others’ letters survive, resulting in an inevitable overstatement of Cicero.
- 54 Cornificius was too far away and across the sea to be of immediate assistance against Antony and had his own troubles with T. Sextius, but Cicero did allude to the *necessitudo*

- between them: *Fam.* 12.22, 27A = SB 346, 357; *Phil.* 3.38.
- 55 Rawson 1975b, 280. “Plancus in particular, son of an old friend but with a brother in Antony’s camp ... was bombarded with flattery and appeals.” She does not identify this brother, and the index cites Plancus as “Caius.”
- 56 *Fam.* 11.5.3 and 7.2 = SB 353–54.
- 57 *Fam.* 10.3,3f, = SB 355. *Dignitas* was in part determined by offices held; “prestige” and “dignity” fall short as definitions. The phrase echoes “*omni cogitatione curaque incumbere*” in 10.4.1 = SB 340, to Plancus.
- 58 *Phil.* 3.12–14; and 4.1–9.
- 59 *Phil.* 3.8–12; 4.7. The hero is generally thought to be an ancestor of Marcus Brutus. Atticus drew up a family tree for Marcus showing his descent from the famed regicide: *Att.* 13.40 = SB 343.
- 60 *Phil.* 3.32–8; 4.12.
- 61 *Fam.* 10.1.3; 2.2; 3.4 = SB 340, 353, 355.
- 62 See Hands 1959, 56–60. The pseudo-Sallustian *Invectiva in Ciceronem* picks up Sallust’s dislike of Cicero’s dissimulation and calls him “*homo levissimus modo harum, modo illarum partium, fidus nemini*” (3.5). Quintus Cicero’s harsh judgment of Hirtius and Pansa at about this time (*Fam.* 16.27 = SB 352) is for time-serving and may reflect his own jealousy at their successes, whereas he abandoned Caesar and failed to rise above the praetorship. He was not to become consul, whereas they were. Cicero himself was equally harsh toward Hirtius in late May 44: *Att.* 15.4 = SB 383. Pollio’s concerns to keep the peace and spare lives: *Fam.* 10.31.5 = SB 368.
- 63 *Fam.* 10.6.2f. = SB 370. Caesar’s men were consuls in name only: *Fam.* 12.2.3 = SB 344. In June, 43 M. Brutus remarked to Atticus that Cicero would accept servitude so long as his master honored him: *ad M. Br.* 1.17 (25 = SB 17. Brutus reduced Cicero to a trained animal doing tricks so long as he is fed and petted. Sallust describes time-serving duplicity in *BC* 10.5.
- 64 Same appeal to Dolabella: *Att.* 14.17 = SB 373; 9. 34 = SB 326.
- 65 Caes., *BC* 1.72.2.

5 Plancus the reluctant warrior

January–July 43

Final attempts at a negotiated compromise:

January–March

Events moved rapidly in 43, though moderates remained willing to negotiate even after Antony advanced into Cisalpina to besiege Decimus Brutus at Mutina. Warfare got ever closer, in spite of efforts to keep the peace. Most politicians and generals with experience of the previous civil war were more cautious than the hot-heads, including Cicero, who was striving mightily to have Antony declared a *hostis*. So far, Cicero had been unable to win general support, as declaring Antony a public enemy would lead directly to the war which cooler heads still hoped to stave off. Once armies began to march, it would be difficult to call a halt, and battles were unpredictable. Antony did not want war and continued to profess a willingness to talk, but he was less open to compromise than Caesar had been in late 50 and the start of 49,¹ and he insisted on a deal which would allow him to preserve his *dignitas*: proceed from the consulship of 44 to a proconsular command for 43, as office conferred immunity from the prosecution his many opponents threatened. By the late fall of 44 he was besieging Dec. Brutus at Mutina (Modena). The passionate Liberators, however, felt that they would lose their *dignitas* if Antony preserved his, and their goal of restoring political life as it had been before Caesar crossed the Rubicon was incompatible with the military domination they felt Antony desired. Multiple contrasting interests and conflicting definitions of *libertas* made it difficult to reach an accord. Moderates strove to devise a compromise settlement which would overcome Cicero's bellicose oratory, isolate the extremists, and give the others much of what they wanted.

Time was short: a gap from December 44 through the end of March 43; any

solution would have to be worked out before winter yielded to spring and fighting season. The incoming consuls Hirtius and Pansa were former Caesarians but not especially close to Antony² and not enthusiastic to fight. Plancus, Lepidus, and Pollio could not move their armies across the Alps as long as snow blocked the passes, but they could use the coastal *Viae Domitia* and *Aurelia*. Brutus and Cassius were confined to east of the Adriatic while the seas were unsafe for transporting armies. The general desire to avoid renewed civil war worked in Antony's favor, but only if statesmen moved quickly.

Cisalpine had been Antony's province of first choice, politically an unwise selection as it would require altering the *acta Caesaris* against the interests of Dec. Brutus, who naturally refused to go along with any plan which cost him his *provincia*. Often judged reckless and headstrong by his rivals, the image of Antony with a large army of Caesar's veterans in the northern part of the peninsula menacing Rome was not pleasant. Some other province and a more cooperative commander might work. The assassins were in control of the lands east of the Adriatic, which were in any case too remote for Antony who had already rejected Macedonia, though he had accepted its legions and moved them to Italy. North Africa was not considered. Farther Spain was also too distant, and nobody even approached Pollio. This left two possibilities: Lepidus in Narbonensis and Nearer Spain and Plancus in Comata. Lepidus might regard any cession of his command as infringing the *dignitas*: he was, after all, very noble, patrician, consular, Master of the Horse, and now Pontifex Maximus. He might well ally with Antony, two Caesarians coming together, but deferring to Antony was another matter.

That left Plancus in Gallia Comata. The Alps would keep Antony out of Italy. He would have two Caesarian governors with armies nearby, Lepidus and Pollio, a counterpart to M. Brutus and Cassius in the east. The possibility of war with Germans or Gauls justified retention of a large army. Whether Plancus would cooperate remained to be seen. Relations between him and Antony had been chilly, if not frosty, but Antony could guarantee his support for the consulship, which Caesar had promised, and assure him that he did not hold a grudge from 45 when Plancus had threatened to compel him to pay up for Pompey's Rome mansion. From Plancus' perspective, an alliance with Antony to get his consulship might be worth the price of generously ceding his province in the interest of peace some months before his term expired. Antony and Cicero were in a tug of war for Plancus' loyalty. Both could appeal to the cause of the *res publica* though they had different conceptions of it. Antony's *res publica* was a modified form of Caesar's, a state wherein senators of newer families had their chances to obtain consulships, military commands, wealth, and *gloria*. There is no sign that Antony aspired to hold power permanently as Caesar had done. Cicero's was the glamorized version of the generation of

Scipio Aemilianus, wherein senators rose by merit and – at least in the *Somnium Scipionis* – won immortality and earthly fame by deeds in service to the ancestral state.

The session of the Senate on January 1 was revealing. Q. Fufius Calenus (cos. 47) was called on to speak first. Far from the most senior consular but a Caesarian and the father-in-law of the consul Pansa,³ Calenus proposed an embassy be sent to Antony. Thus the moderate Caesarians got their motion on the floor first. The maneuver put Cicero, who would normally have spoken ahead of Calenus because he was sixteen years senior to him as consul, on the defensive and compelled him to counter the present motion before proposing his own. Calenus' argument is known chiefly through Cicero's allusions, which makes reconstruction uncertain. Dio's rendition is more the Greek historian than the Roman senator.⁴ Appian, on the other hand, moves the encounter between Cicero and his opponents to the last day of the debate, omits Calenus altogether, and has L. Piso respond to Cicero.⁵

The Fifth Philippic is Cicero's response. He spoke after Calenus but did not mention any speech by Piso. He had heard the rumor that Antony was to be offered the governorship of Gallia Comata, a proposal separate from Calenus' of the embassy and evidently not formally moved. Nothing came of it, and we do not even know whose idea it was.⁶ It was similar to a proposal Antony had brought up in April 44, so he must have approved of it now. The move would have rendered moot Cicero's passionate advocacy of war on Antony and deprived Brutus and Cassius of the justification to recruit troops in the east. Cicero did carry proposals to make Octavian propraetor and to honor Dec. Brutus and Lepidus, and he recommended declaration of a *tumultus* (armed unrest, one step short of a *bellum*) and passage of a *Senatus Consultum Ultimum* to back up the consuls against Antony.

Plancus' cooperation was obviously essential to the success of the "rumor," for he would be required to relinquish his province to Antony and be a *privatus* all through 43, vulnerable to prosecution by his political enemies if they chose not to maintain the compromise of the previous March. The *consul designatus*' consulship was at risk, yet Plancus seems to have been willing to go along, for in Philipppics 7 and 8, delivered in the late winter, Cicero conjured an image of Antony demanding a tenure of five years with six legions and leading Gallic barbarians against Rome. Plancus and Antony were likely in touch by military couriers at this time, as they certainly were in the spring. Plancus' readiness to give up a year of his proconsulship shows his ability to compromise. "I am prepared to go wherever the state may summon me, to hand over my army (the legions), the auxiliaries, and my province."⁷ He had already conducted a victorious campaign against a foreign enemy, claimed a triumph, and founded a colony. Now if all went well he could gain immense

auctoritas and *fama* by preserving the peace. His vision of the *res publica* flexibly combined that of his old friend and former teacher with that of his Caesarian colleagues.

The decision of January 4 to send the envoys to Antony indicates that a majority of senators felt the chance for a negotiated peace ought not to be lost.⁸ Cicero's claim that Calenus was in a minority of one in the Senate from January 1 and did not agree with his son-in-law Pansa is transparently false.⁹ The prestigious consular envoys all had respectable Caesarian credentials: Caesar's father-in-law L. Calpurnius Piso, Octavian's stepfather L. Marcus Philippus, and the one-time Caesarian officer Ser. Sulpicius Rufus. They carried senatorial instructions that Antony should break off the siege and withdraw from Cisalpine Gaul to a location south of the Rubicon river but not closer than 200 miles to Rome – not northwest toward Lepidus and Plancus and their armies on the other side of the Alps. If he failed to obey, a declaration of *hostis* would follow.¹⁰ In the Sixth Philippic, delivered to the people on January 4, Cicero set out the best interpretation he could manage on the situation and confidently predicted that the embassy would be a waste of time as Antony would not heed its instructions to him.

Little happened for the rest of January. Everybody awaited the results of the embassy to Antony, and the season prevented active campaigning. Armies could not move easily and certainly not across the Alps. Plancus' location and activities until late April are not known, but headquarters close to where Lugdunum would arise is likely. Couriers made their way back and forth, political maneuvers continued, and Pansa raised troops.¹¹ It is a great pity that we have no letters between Plancus and correspondents other than Cicero.

In Philippic Seven, delivered in the middle of January before the return of the envoys, Cicero praised Pansa, tried to detach him from Calenus, and claimed that no one was more in favor of peace than him. But there could be no peace with Antony: it would be dishonorable, dangerous, and was anyway impossible. Antony continued his siege but was rumored willing to trade Cisalpina for Comata.¹² About this time Cicero wrote a brief note to Plancus in response to one from him.

The letter is surprisingly bland.¹³ Cicero did not mention events at Rome or that Hirtius had led his army out against Antony and confined his remarks to platitudes of affection and patriotism. Does omission of the embassy to Antony imply that Cicero thought Plancus backed it? Cicero's theme is familiar: you have made it to high office so far by "luck and the times," but if you apply yourself you will shortly win *gloria* by saving the state at this critical time.¹⁴ At the close, Cicero spoke to Plancus as to a son, just as he had earlier stressed his friendship with Plancus "from boyhood" and with his father.¹⁵

The legation returned to Rome in late January, or rather two of its members

did, as Sulpicius died before reaching Antony. Cicero is the source for much of what is known about the journey and reactions at Rome: a few letters and the three or four Philippics of February.¹⁶ Plancus' reluctance to commit his army matched that of Lepidus, Pollio, and the new consuls – all of whom Plancus knew quite well from years of service under Caesar. While the commanders hung back, the politicians had their chance. The window of opportunity was not open very far, and the winds of war could blow it shut almost without warning.

Antony rejected the Senate's orders but countered with an offer of his own: the exchange of Cisalpina for Comata and the preservation of Caesar's *acta*. Cicero heaped scorn on the envoys: "nothing fouler, nothing more shameful."¹⁷ But he was probably frightened that Antony's proposal might succeed, and that would ruin his calls to war. Antony must have obtained Plancus' consent and presumably that of the two surviving ambassadors. He was by no means as isolated as Cicero would have his audience believe. Somewhat later he sent an open letter to Hirtius and Octavian, in which he revealed that he was in touch with Lepidus and Plancus and called on the recipients as Caesarians to put aside their squabbles and avenge their murdered patron.¹⁸ If they did not, they could lose everything, as if the Liberators came to power they might abrogate Caesar's appointments to magistracies and prosecute Caesar's former supporters.

Antony could make a good case to Plancus, who may have indicated in response his willingness to cooperate and give up Comata if by so doing he could help prevent civil war and keep his consulship now only about nine months away. When in March Hirtius turned over to Cicero Antony's letter to him, he made his final effort to get the orator to realize that there was another solution to the crisis than the war which Cicero had been urging. Antony's potential allies included the three western governors with armies.

Calenus, Pansa, Piso, and Antony's maternal uncle L. Julius Caesar (cos. 64) advocated the dispatch of another embassy to Mutina and proposed the declaration of a *tumultus* against an *adversarius*, which would step up the pressure on Antony without making him a *hostis*.¹⁹ The Senate approved the declaration but not the embassy. By late February winter was yielding to spring and the commencement of the campaigning season. Hard decisions were at hand, hardest of all for those with armies close to Cisalpine Gaul where the immediate fighting would occur.

The Senate summoned Plancus and Lepidus to lead their armies against Antony. The ensuing division of opinion at Rome is revealed in Philippic 10. The consul Pansa advocated regularization of Dec. Brutus' position, but Calenus wanted the Senate to refuse him the governorship. Pansa carried the day, and the senators also legitimized the commands of M. Brutus and C.

Cassius in Macedonia and Syria. Brutus soon won full control of the Balkan peninsula when the veteran Caesarian P. Vatinius voluntarily turned over his army.

According to Dio, “some tribunes and praetors” moved to Antony’s camp, while Calenus continued to work for his cause at Rome. As is often the case, Dio has condensed his sources to get on with the narrative. He is vague as to the date and provides no names. All of this is broadly consonant with February and March, but the absence of names is regrettable.²⁰ Cicero provides a fuller version in the Twelfth Philippic, delivered about March 7, and his letters supply more information.

In a letter to Plancus on March 20, the day of Philippic 13, Cicero said Plancus’ legate Furnius and his brother, *optimus vir*, would soon update him in person on events and sentiments at Rome. The brother is L. Plautius Plancus, one of the year’s praetors, so probably one of those who left Rome in March (so Dio). Plautius’ primary destination was likely Plancus’ headquarters in Gaul, though he may have stopped along the way at Mutina to leave messages for Antony and pick up others to be carried on north. He is next heard of at the end of April with Plancus. This letter illustrates Cicero’s reluctance to be explicit when unsure that his letters would reach their addressees unopened and unread, or that the couriers would even arrive at all. In these instances Cicero preferred to let a messenger relay information verbally.²¹

In Asia, Dolabella savagely murdered Trebonius, a Caesarian turncoat. News of the deed reached Rome in early February and provoked universal disgust: Trebonius became a martyr and Dolabella by implication an Antonian henchman, though Antony had nothing to do with it and he and Dolabella had been at odds in 44. Fufius Calenus proposed that Dolabella be declared a *hostis*,²² in effect decreeing that the culprit had forfeited his Roman citizenship and was no longer entitled to the protection of the law but was in the same category as Catiline twenty years earlier. Once again Calenus had the opportunity to deliver his *sententia* before Cicero and thus demonstrate that reputable Caesarians did not condone butchery by fanatics claiming to act in Caesar’s name. The consuls should lead their armies against Dolabella once they had lifted the siege of Decimus Brutus. Calenus hoped to prevent warfare in the west and shift it to the east. In his mad quest for personal power the rash Dolabella provided an opening for another burst of maneuvering. As will soon be apparent, there was still more to Calenus’ tactics.

Cicero’s counter-tactic was to associate Antony in criminality with Dolabella, easily done when Antony gloated over Trebonius’ fate. Cicero quoted from his letter to Hirtius and Octavian in the Thirteenth Philippic. Respectable senators could not defend Antony, who condoned Dolabella. Now, a decade later, Antony made it difficult, if not impossible, for anyone of

dignitas to support him publicly. If we can assume that the senators in Rome were willing to allow Plancus to hold his consulship, they now had to cut him away from Antony. The senators and Antony were thus both fishing for Plancus' support by dangling the same bait in front of him: the consulship. If his career was his only concern, all he had to do was make sure that the side he joined won. Is this what he did?

Again the Twelfth Philippic provides several clues. Calenus and Piso indicated that Antony was now willing to negotiate, so the Senate prepared to send another embassy to him. If Antony was serious, he may have felt the military situation was not playing out as he had expected: the Caesarians were not rallying around him, Octavian was no longer a minor nuisance but a serious threat to his standing, Hirtius and Pansa were ready to lead an army against him and relieve Decimus (determinedly resisting in Mutina), and M. Brutus and Cassius had control of most of the east. Antony may also have been stalling for time to persuade the other western governors to bring their armies in support of him. Membership of this embassy was balanced: Calenus and Piso were lukewarm Antonians, L. Julius Caesar was perhaps in the middle (Antony's kinsman but on good terms with Cicero), and Cicero and P. Servilius Isauricus. (Servilius was a veteran Caesarian but opposed to Antony and with family ties in both camps: his wife was a Julia, one of three half-sisters of M. Brutus, the other two of whom were married to Lepidus and Cassius.) All five members were consulars (64, 63, 58, and two in 47): this was a legation of much *auctoritas gravitasque*.

Decimus Brutus would be relieved if Antony voluntarily lifted the siege and moved off; it was not necessary that he be defeated militarily. Calenus envisioned an interlocking five-step sequence which he hoped would prevent war. First, Plancus would agree to yield his province and be superseded by Antony, an idea first raised the previous spring and recently revived. As best one can tell, Plancus was well informed and willing to cooperate. Without him the whole plan was doomed. Cicero adamantly denied it, but in an official dispatch in mid-March Plancus said he was still prepared to hand over his army and province.²³ Of the two consuls-designate for 42, the *serviens temporibus* Plancus alone was flexible, willing to yield to maintain peace. Second, Antony would lead his army across the Alps as soon as the passes were free of snow and ice. This would get him and his army out of the peninsula and take the pressure off Brutus, who, now liberated, could stay on as governor of Cisalpine Gaul until becoming consul with Plancus on January 1. A moderate Caesarian with ties to the Republicans and a Liberator who had once been a Caesarian as consular colleagues in 42 would symbolize the avoidance of war.

Third, Hirtius and Pansa would draw lots for Asia and Syria to conduct war

on Dolabella. Pansa as presiding consul blocked Cicero's proposal to regularize Cassius' *de facto* command in Syria.²⁴ Fourth, Antony would stay on as proconsul of Farther Gaul (= Comata) for five years, a term which would protect him from reprisals by the Liberators. He could keep his army and might find occasion to employ it against Germans or Gauls. Equally, it demonstrated that the Caesarians would allow Brutus and Cassius their consulships. Fifth, Marcus Brutus was to give up his irregularly acquired province and army, an idea Cicero had already criticized in Philippic 10 in early February.

Several weaknesses brought about the rapid collapse of Calenus' grand scheme. It had been devised too quickly and was too complicated. The *puer* Octavian was too important to be left out of consideration, and it was soon clear that Brutus and Cassius were not going to cooperate. The slowness of communications prevented effective contact, and senators in Rome could not direct the actions of provincial governors. Cicero was a major barrier, as he was dead set against it from the start and would never approve any project which left Antony intact, whereas Antony would not permit the diminution of his *dignitas*, in this following the precedent of Caesar in 50–49.²⁵ Events soon showed that he was right to suspect the intentions of M. Brutus and Cassius. Cassius spoiled part of the project by winning Syria and an army which soon pushed Dolabella to Laodicea and suicide before the consuls at Rome could act.

Simultaneously, M. Brutus spoiled his portion when he captured Antony's brother Caius at Apollonia, slapped him in prison, and seized control of Greece, Macedonia, and Illyricum. Antony could not be expected to accept this. Brutus and Cassius in command of armies was precisely what Calenus did not want, men of greater passion than practicality who had never showed much inclination to avoid war. Their successes increased Cicero's zeal. The Liberators now had control of all Roman lands east of the Adriatic, and they had done it on their own, appealing to the same principle of higher law that a year ago had justified in their minds the assassination of Caesar. Cicero was delighted. Just as some weeks earlier he had praised them for being a Senate unto themselves,²⁶ now he did as Servilius Isauricus and withdrew from the legation to Antony. The embassy never left. By mid-March the project was dead.

Likely learning of the events in the east as quickly as did men at Rome and realizing that Brutus and Cassius had no intention of cooperating, Antony redoubled his efforts to unite the Caesarians in the face of these threats. At about this time Hirtius received and passed on to Cicero the letter Antony had sent him and Octavian. Other Caesarians presumably received similar messages.²⁷ Just as the peace initiative fizzled out, dispatches from Lepidus and Plancus urging peace arrived at Rome. Since these missives have been lost and

Cicero's responses do not quote them, it is impossible to be confident of their content. We can assume that the authors cautioned against a rush to war and the consequent loss of Roman lives and supported negotiations with Antony, though perhaps not admitting to being in contact with him.

Cicero responded with two quite different letters on March 20, one to Lepidus and one to Plancus.²⁸ That to Lepidus was frank, practically rude, in that a plebeian *novus* sent it to a patrician *nobilis*: boldly and without polite ornamentation Cicero told Lepidus that the Senate did not approve his advocacy of peace. The letter to Plancus was almost a paternal "I'm surprised that a son of mine would do such a thing." In essence, Cicero said "I do this for your own good" ("*haec impulsus benevolentia scripsi paulo severius*"), making good his earlier promise to treat him as a son. The contrasting tones reveal his expectation that he could guide his old friend and pupil and the realization that he could not exert much influence on Lepidus. The latter made no secret of being allied to Antony and blocked Pollio's messengers from Farther Spain.²⁹

Cicero's letter to Plancus is deliberately brief, as he said Plancus would get a full account of the Senate's reaction to his effort to promote peace from his brother the praetor L. Plautius Plancus, *optimus vir*, and his legate C. Furnius, as they were soon to return to Gaul. (As noted earlier, they may have stopped at Antony's camp en route.) Furnius had carried messages from Plancus to Rome and back in December and seems to have been the bearer of Plancus' recent dispatch as well. Apparently Furnius realized when he got to Rome that the political situation had altered greatly since his commander wrote the letter. Now in an awkward position, he tried to improvise on the spot a verbal message adapted to the new circumstances and put Plancus' words in a better light. Cicero observed that Plancus' attitude as reported by Furnius in the Senate did not correspond very well with what he had actually written. He then admonished Plancus, hoping to shame him to a better sense of duty. Circumstances ("*temporum vincla*") have caused him to keep some bad company, but now he could show his true colors. If he joined the cause of "*libertas populi Romani et senatus auctoritas*" (the freedom of the Roman people and the prestige of the Senate), he would be "*auctor, princeps, dux*" and more, a "*magnus consul et consularis*" (an initiator of policy, a leader, a commander, a great consul and consular). Otherwise "there will be not only no *dignitas* but the greatest *deformitas*."

Cicero wrote these letters to Plancus and Lepidus the same day he delivered the Thirteenth Philippic, March 20. Commentators have assumed that the speech originally condemned Plancus' advocacy of peace but that Cicero edited this out when he wrote up the published version: the text of *Phil.*13 does not allude to Plancus' letter. The editing must have been done after Plancus was known to be on the march against Antony in late April. In contrast is

Cicero's handling of Antony's letter to Hirtius and Octavian, which forms the core of the oration.³⁰

In the speech Cicero vigorously denied that any right-minded person would even think of making peace with Antony and degraded the extent of Antony's support by misleadingly naming only the rabble elements and omitting the senators. This, of course, misses the reality that many of the senators were not so much supporting Antony as advocating peace. Those senators who continued to seek a compromise and settlement without arms were not necessarily pro-Antonians in political sentiment. Cicero was not interested in any distinctions or shades of judgment. The assassins were heroes, and all who did not see this were Antonian scoundrels. This thinking was ultimately fatal.

Cicero carefully combined praise and admonition in passages directed to Lepidus; the peace he had achieved with Sextus Pompey (now a point of refuge for the disgruntled die-hards), for which the Senate had honored him with an equestrian statue was admirable but that which he is now advocating with Antony, is shameful.³¹ Cicero devoted roughly the second half of the oration to demolishing the credibility of Antony's letter to Hirtius and Octavian. Antony rightly accused Cicero of being chiefly responsible for wrecking the amnesty and raising Octavian against him. Now that negotiations were off, Antony could scorn the recently proposed embassy of five consulars and allude to his own earlier moderation in proposed to accept "Gallia ultima" (Comata), Plancus' province. Cicero was at great pains to deny the claim of cooperation with Lepidus and Plancus: Antony spoke of his refusal "to violate [his] pact with that most dutiful of men, Lepidus, or to betray Plancus, the partner of my counsels."³² This ought to have given all who heard the letter cause to rethink their politics. Whether Plancus was as committed to Antony at the time as Antony claimed is doubtful, so "partner of my counsels" is an exaggeration. Pollio thought Lepidus an Antonian, and he did send some soldiers under M. Junius Silanus to Antony who fought for him in April.³³

In the latter part of March, within a few days of the delivery of Philippic 13 and Pansa's departure from Rome to join Hirtius and Octavian in Cisalpine Gaul, Plancus sent an official communiqué to the Senate and a covering letter to Cicero; they were received in Rome on April 7.³⁴ These missives seem to reveal a shift in his thinking. He hoped, but doubted, that even as he wrote peace had been achieved: he was unaware of the intensification of military activity around Mutina, and we get a glimpse of the slowness of communication at this time of crisis. He professed continued willingness to turn over both army and province (to Antony) if that would help. His thinking soon shifted again.

Most of the dispatch deals with the expectation of war and his dedication to the *res publica*. He first defended himself against charges of inactivity by

saying, in essence, that actions speak more loudly than words. Some persons had been excessively and prematurely rewarded for mere promises of loyalty, but he himself had been quietly strengthening his province, increasing his army and reinforcing its loyalty, and sounding out the neighboring governors (Lepidus and Pollio). His goal was that they might act in concert and minimize their casualties in war. The actual number of legions under the three western governors is not quite clear, but they had a large force.³⁵ He was now prepared to defend his province, go wherever the state might send him, or even take upon himself the entire burden of the war. He had no intention of contending single-handedly with Antony, but the phrase made a fine culmination to the ascending protestations of loyalty. The dispatch concluded with a reaffirmation of patriotism which there is no good reason to reject outright. Indeed, the next we hear of him, on April 27, Plancus was marching south against Antony. His attitude in mid-March was quite similar to that of Pollio.

The evidence for opposition to renewed civil war is scattered but constant. Reluctance to plunge Rome back into civil war was general, but the surviving documentation gives excessive weight to Cicero's speeches and letters.³⁶ Since the effort, through three attempted embassies to Antony (only the first actually sent), never came close to success, it was readily almost forgotten in the dramatic rush of events in 43–42.³⁷

In Rome the Caesarian consuls concluded that a military resolution was unavoidable. Hirtius must have made up his mind to fight about the Ides of March, an appropriate anniversary, and so gave Cicero the letter he had received from Antony. Cicero incorporated it into Philippic 13. Pansa, who had been at the heart of the negotiations for peace, left Rome with his army on March 20, though the march to Mutina would take over a week through the Apennines. His departure likewise indicated the termination of all efforts to devise a settlement and the Senate's determination to resort to war. The consuls also evidently also calculated that their decision to move would sway Lepidus, Plancus, and Pollio, but they remained hesitant. On March 16 Pollio wrote that he was on the point of moving out against Antony, but in fact he did not or returned to his base at Corduba (Cordova), and he was still there in early June. Plancus wrote much the same thing about a week later and similarly stayed put.³⁸

Even if not convinced by either side's propaganda, by the end of March Plancus realized that the peace negotiations were dead. Arms, not words, would decide Antony's fate and perhaps that of the *res publica* as well. Neutrality was not an option, for the victors would probably deal harshly with anyone of importance who failed to provide active support. The Pompeians had proclaimed that in 49, and the present batch of Republicans would be no more conciliatory and probably more vindictive, propelled by their heavy

losses and resentment of the Caesarians' successes over the past six years. Antony was unlikely to repeat Caesar's *clementia* after having witnessed Caesar's fate. Passions were stronger now than in 50–49. At the very least, Plancus could expect to lose his consulship if he failed to be prominent among the winners. He would have to assess carefully, weighing principles, affection toward the *res publica*, his *necessitudo* for Cicero, and personal ambitions and hopes. Old friend and former pupil of Cicero's though he was, Plancus must have been weary of Cicero's hectoring as well as disappointed in his political vision. Plancus was long past his time as a pupil and determined to appraise and act for himself.

The pivotal event in the spring of 43 was the two battles around Mutina. On April 15 Hirtius inflicted heavy casualties on Antony's army, but Pansa was gravely wounded. News reached Rome on the April 20, and Cicero's reaction is the Fourteenth Philippic delivered the same day.³⁹ Hirtius defeated Antony again on April 21 at Mutina and compelled him to retreat. It was not a rout, and Antony withdrew in an orderly way to the northwest and in two weeks was reinforced by P. Ventidius. In the sequel the Senate declared Antony a *hostis*, but the rejoicing was premature. The cost of liberating Decimus Brutus proved greater than anyone realized at the time. Hirtius died in the second battle, and Pansa succumbed to his wounds from the first on the April 23. The death of both consuls was a stroke of luck for the propraetor Octavian, who had been given the nominal rank and allowed to tag along to get him out of Rome. He now claimed command of the army and, knowing the senatorial intention to eliminate him, refused to be subordinate to Dec. Brutus as the Senate had ordered.⁴⁰

Armies on the move; Plancus moves southward, then pulls back: late April–early June

If Hirtius dispatched a courier to Plancus on April 15 or 16, the messenger's arrival may have determined Plancus' actions. On April 27, he wrote Cicero that he had crossed the Rhone and was heading southward toward Vienna (Vienne) with his cavalry in front and himself on guard against possible interference from Lepidus.⁴¹ If he moved swiftly, Plancus could appear patriotically decisive and might arrive in time to assist the Republicans in the restoration of liberty. Hence he asserted that he was pushing his army hard ("*magnis itineribus*").

Plancus' starting point can be surmised with reasonable confidence. Since in that letter of April 27 he commented that he had crossed the Rhodanus (Rhône) and had bridged the Isara (Isère) which flows into the Rhone from the

east, he must have set out from somewhere on the west side of the river. This makes it highly probable that he had been using Caesar's old base on the hill above the confluence of the Rhodanus and Arar (Saône) rivers – where some months later he founded Colonia Munatia Felix Lugdunum.⁴² This location was ideally suited, as from it he had been able to keep watch over the tribes of Gaul and had campaigned up the Rhone over to the Rhine and had founded Raurica. The Saône provided easy access to the network of rivers and so communication and commercial development to the northwest, north, and northeast. The confluence was equally well sited for surveillance of the rapidly changing military crisis in north Italy; it afforded Plancus the necessary approaches to Cisalpina either via the Alpine passes to the east or down the Rhone into Narbonensis where the Via Domitia ran east to the Italian border and joined the Via Aurelia which followed the coast to Rome. He could stay in touch with Lepidus in Narbonensis, Decimus Brutus, and Antony in Cisalpina.

Plancus moved along the left bank of the Rhone. A flurry of letters, mostly to Cicero, allows us to track the movement of his and the other western armies from late April to the end of July. See [Figure 5.1](#). There are eight letters from Plancus, eight from Decimus Brutus, one from the two of them together, three from Lepidus, and two from Pollio. The letters can be combined with information in other writers. We are better informed about the facts of these months than about the intentions of Plancus, Lepidus, and Pollio. Since none ever offered battle for the *res publica* and all eventually joined Antony, it is easy to infer that they never planned to fight and expected all along to adhere to the Caesarians. That, however, is to prejudge the issue. One should attempt to watch events unfold from their camps as they assessed the crisis while edging toward Antony.⁴³

Plancus' platter was heaped with concerns, and the pile grew steadily higher: he could not be certain of anybody's true goals. He was as concerned about Lepidus as about Antony. To be sure, the latter was the more experienced commander and better leader of soldiers, but the former was geographically closer to Plancus, had a large army, and was moreover from a family which had been the patron of the Munatii Planci for well over a century. His entire career had been in the service of Caesar, so he was assumed to be a Caesarian now, but for reasons no longer clear, he was also generally regarded as a political lightweight. He had a mighty name but lacked firmness. Dealing with Lepidus would require wary caution (*servire temporibus*), not rashness. There was the problem of the consular armies and their new commander, the unknown Octavian. Already it was clear to attentive observers that the senators had too readily dismissed the young Caesar as a largely irrelevant *puer* ("boy" but with sneering overtones, "kid, punk"). He was demonstrating surprising shrewdness and the capability of double-dealing

if it suited his purposes. As the weeks slid by he upset many politicians' calculations, including Plancus', and proved to be a primary shaper of events, not a tool to be wielded by others. Later Plancus wrote that he had been in contact with Octavian, apparently for some time, and had been counting on him and his army against Antony. But Octavian never followed through, so Plancus miscalculated and got fooled. Plancus' relations with the future Augustus got off to a rough start, with each mistrusting the other as devious and unreliable.

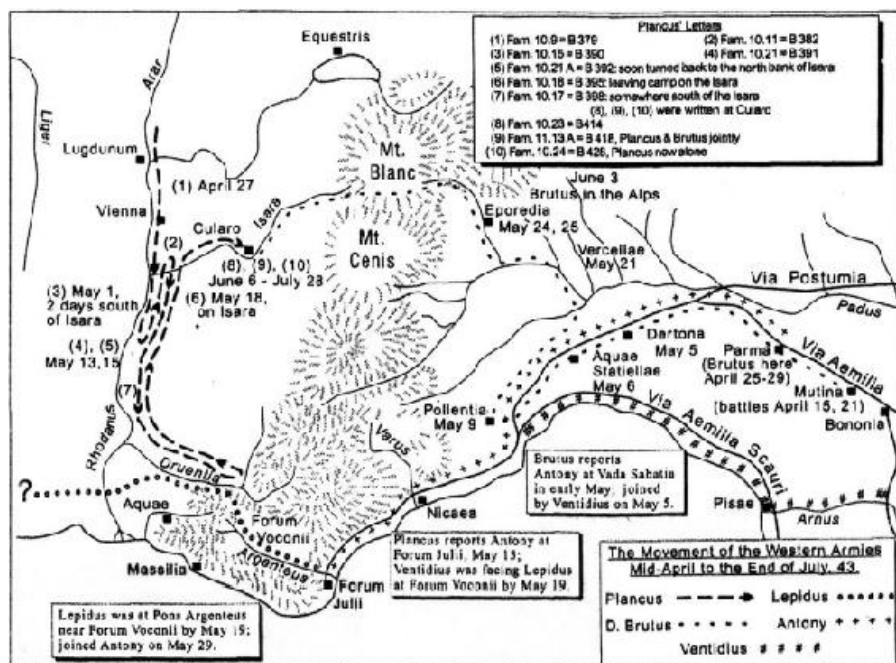


Figure 5.1 Movement of the western armies, April–July 43

The military situation changed rapidly as Plancus moved southward. The *magna itinera*, or forced marches, on April 27 slowed to careful probing when he discovered new disturbing developments. Antony had been driven into retreat but not destroyed. While Plancus evidently did not know that Decimus Brutus' army was so battered as a result of the months of blockade it could not prevent Antony's orderly withdrawal into Liguria, he must have at least suspected that Brutus' troops were in no condition to fight Antony's veterans. He only learned the full truth when the weary men arrived at his camp in early June, after Lepidus had joined Antony and Plancus himself had pulled back to the north.

A fresh worrisome development arose: what was Octavian up to? There were some clues. Did Plancus know or suspect Octavian's concerns to protect

himself from the machinations of Cicero and the Senate (to discard him now that Antony had been pushed away from Brutus) and his immensely illegal demand to be made consul before his twentieth birthday? What was clear is that his failure to pursue Antony once he had been driven away from Mutina was deliberate, a refusal to do what the Senate had instructed. Plancus must have realized, almost too late, that Octavian had no intention of cooperating with the Senate in Rome (led by Cicero) and Decimus in the destruction of Antony. Octavian had let Ventidius with three new legions march unmolested from his recruiting grounds in Picenum across the Apennines to join Antony at Vada Sabatia (Savona) in Liguria on May 5, a signal to Antony of his thinking. Together Antony and Ventidius crossed the Alps to deal with Lepidus in the southeastern portion of Narbonensis.

Antony and Lepidus had cooperated in the period after the Ides of March. A daughter of Antony had even been betrothed to a son of Lepidus, and Antony had arranged for Lepidus to succeed to Caesar's position as Pontifex Maximus.⁴⁴ Octavian no less than Antony realized the practical necessity for the Caesarians to close ranks in the west, and to this end he wrote Pollio, Lepidus, and Antony.⁴⁵ He seems not to have written Plancus, and the reason must be that he regarded him as committed to Cicero and the Republicans. It is tempting to guess that Cicero boasted to Octavian that Plancus would do as he (Cicero) called on him to do. Taking the speculation a step further, perhaps Cicero showed Octavian some of Plancus' letters, and Octavian even talked with Plancus' brother, whom he later proscribed. The young Caesar and Antony had contrasting assessments of the proconsul of Comata, as Antony claimed he was *particeps consiliorum*.⁴⁶ Was Antony telling the truth? It could be a ploy to shake the confidence of all who read of it, just as Cicero was overconfident in his own ability to direct Plancus. More likely, Antony was fairly confident that Plancus could come over to him, in part because if he did not he would be left alone among the western governors, not an envious position. Plancus had probably written him in the same vein as he had Cicero – eloquent professions of loyalty to the cause and condemnation of the assassins.

Antony did write to Plancus, and Dec. Brutus captured some of the messages.⁴⁷ The incident did not deter Decimus from marching to Plancus in June or Plancus from welcoming him on arrival, so he must have assessed his intended consular colleague as firmly against Antony and the other Caesarians. Brutus would not have taken his weary soldiers into the camp of a man even suspected of being less than loyal to Decimus' cause. What Antony said in these captured messages is not recorded, but he presumably emphasized the common bonds of loyalty to Caesar and Caesar's memory and that he would let bygones be bygones with regard to Plancus' anti-Antony

actions back in 45. Because of his long service with Caesar, Antony knew better than Octavian the strength of Caesar's personality and political patronage. He surely appreciated Plancus' assent to the attempted settlement over the past months, especially that he had been willing to cede his province to Antony months early, in return for which Antony would guarantee Plancus' consulship. He could also logically argue that the Liberators were only flattering and deluding Plancus now and would deny the consulship and set him aside if they came to power. This was similar to what Cicero has plotted to do with Octavian: he, too, would be *laudandum, ornandum, tollendum*.⁴⁸ Once Lepidus had joined him, Antony may also have made the point that Plancus ought now to follow the lead of his longtime patron.

How persuasive Plancus found these arguments (assuming them roughly correct) is unknown, nor is it certain that he even responded. In June he said he had arrested one of Antony's envoys and refused to listen to him,⁴⁹ but in late April and early May he may have been open to talk. All the commanders were keeping the couriers busy and their horses worn out with rapid exchanges of letters. With both sides seeking his alliance and, as noted earlier, fishing with the same bait (the consulship), Plancus likely wrote carefully noncommittal letters to both sides, though only those to Cicero survive, and each recipient interpreted as best suited his desires and needs.

The only hope of eliminating Antony was a coalition of western armies, those of Plancus, Lepidus, and Pollio. This disappeared like a morning mist, and again the military situation changed to Plancus' disadvantage. Lepidus had the largest army, seven legions, but nobody was certain as to his intentions. Decimus thought him "*ventosissimus*," windy, without substance, or a windbag, and worried about the attitude of both Pollio and Plancus. He was certain the former would join Antony if given the chance, but he judged Plancus to be inclined toward the Republic though in need of continual encouragement.⁵⁰ Pollio agreed about Lepidus in mid-March, and in early June claimed that he and Plancus could have won him away from Antony. Cicero criticized Lepidus for *levitas, inconstantia*, and an "*animus semper inimicus rei publicae*" in a letter to Marcus Brutus in which he defended Plancus; Marcus agreed.⁵¹

Until almost too late, Plancus was ignorant of the depleted condition of Decimus Brutus' army⁵² and even more worried about Lepidus. With Decimus out of the picture, that left Lepidus, without whose army Plancus could not go up against Antony and Ventidius. As a consequence he was reluctant to move too quickly toward Italy. If he came close to Antony and Lepidus transferred his allegiance to Antony, Plancus would be caught between two armies (theirs and Octavian's) and crushed. He tried to firm up Lepidus' loyalty by dispatching his brother Plautius Plancus and legate Furnius and returning

Lepidus' legate Laterensis. He told Cicero that personal differences with Lepidus would not prevent him from acting for the "welfare of the state," and he promised the *obsequia* (duties of a client). For a time Plancus resolved to push on south.

His advance southward into Lepidus' province was slow, as letters to Cicero reveal.⁵³ Couriers kept up their hectic pace. North of the Isère in the lands of the Allobroges on May 1, Plancus was only two days' march south of the river ten days later. He discovered that Lucius Antonius had occupied Forum Julii (Fréjus), and so sent his brother on ahead with 4000 cavalry to bar the Antonians' farther advance. Plancus followed with four legions and the remainder of his horse. The large cavalry force was likely made up of Gauls, who supplied Rome's best horsemen, and may have been at least in part his own recruits. In the surviving letters Plancus did not comment on the deaths of Hirtius and Pansa or the actions of Octavian. A passing reference to the consuls' fate appears to indicate that he had known of their deaths for some time, so one or more letters may be lost.⁵⁴

In early May Lepidus moved from somewhere west of the lower Rhone – perhaps recalling Caesar's veterans to their old units as the military colonies of Narbo, Baeterrae, and Arelate (Narbonne, Beziers, and Arles) – toward Forum Voconii and the bridge over the Argenteus (Argens) only 24 miles upstream from Antony and Ventidius at Forum Julii. Arriving about the middle of the month, Lepidus wrote to Cicero on May 19 that Ventidius had camped just east of the river with three legions, but otherwise Antony was suffering considerable desertions.⁵⁵ In fact, these were not deserters but "advance agents" fraternizing with Lepidus' men and preparing for the whole of Lepidus' army to join Antony about ten days later. As Plancus drew closer to Lepidus his anxiety increased. Through his legate Laterensis, of whose integrity Plancus had no doubt, Lepidus wrote personally to promise loyalty and entreated Plancus himself for cavalry, in which Lepidus was weak. About the same time Plancus wrote Brutus that Lepidus was standing firm against Antony.⁵⁶ Two days later, Plancus was disgusted at Lepidus, and in a letter to Cicero criticized him for *levitas* (the same quality Cicero has used of him to M. Brutus) and treachery. Perhaps he inferred that Lepidus' appeal for cavalry was a ploy to weaken his army and draw him into a trap. Plancus was sending the evidence to Rome while pulling back north of the Isère.

On May 18 Plancus reported that as a result of further entreaties from Lepidus and Laterensis, he had decided to resume his march southward, leaving the Isère bridge intact but guarded to facilitate Brutus' expected arrival and crossing. He hoped that his resolve and army would bolster the loyalty of Lepidus and his troops, now an estimated eight days' march distant. Putting the best light on it, at least in what he committed to paper, Plancus calculated

that if he did not come to the aid of Lepidus, Antonian elements might subvert his army. This letter was written just as Lepidus was facing Ventidius across the Argenteus river.

Lepidus himself was in a similarly difficult position. In writing he steadily professed loyalty to the *res publica* and the intention of heeding the Senate's and Cicero's urging to fight Antony. Whether he was being honest, even with himself, is impossible to know, but the charges that he was *levis* and *ventosissimus* are not altogether fair, and in any case opponents could probably apply them to Plancus with as much accuracy. The evidence for these pejorative adjectives is limited to Cicero's letters. Given the rapid political and military changes, almost every politician and general was moving carefully, not wanting to commit himself before he could ascertain which way the wind was blowing or was about to blow. It is a safe guess that everybody spoke of everybody else as fickle, untrustworthy, and unreliable. Everybody was almost compelled *servire temporibus* as long as possible, even Antony who only took an uncompromising position when the Senate opened war against him and sent Hirtius and Pansa into battle. Cicero was one of the few who staked out a dogmatic position, and it proved to be a disastrous misjudgment.

Lepidus had little, if any, experience as a field commander and was fearful of going against the veteran and now reinforced Antony. He wanted Plancus' army to increase his own, and he knew Plancus had had several years of field campaigning, most of it against undisciplined Gauls not Roman legionaries. There is no indication that Lepidus feared Plancus would join Antony against him. Plancus was equally disinclined to go it alone against Antony, as his army was smaller than Lepidus' (four or five legions to Lepidus' seven). His fear that Lepidus lacked firmness and might abandon the cause for Antony proved justified, but this was some weeks in the future. If he could get to Lepidus in time to bolster his courage, together they would have a fair chance against Antony. Singly the prospect was grim. Asinius Pollio was far enough away that he had the luxury of sitting tight in Corduba and awaiting results.

Lepidus wrote Plancus, now advancing up the Durantia (Durance) and intending to cross the watershed to the Argenteus, that he would await him and sent a hostage as proof of his good intentions. So Plancus reported about May 21. A day later Lepidus penned affirmations of loyalty to Cicero, and Dec. Brutus was still hopeful of him on May 25.⁵⁷ Conflicting reports about Plancus and Lepidus were reaching Rome, and Cicero was not sure what to make of them; he wanted to think the best but feared the worst. Cicero was gradually realizing that the entire situation was slipping away and that he could not influence, let alone control, events. Plancus' brother fell ill, and Plancus sent him back to Rome when he recovered. On the grounds that the deaths of the consuls demanded the presence of the praetors in the city. Plautius Plancus

was quickly caught up in the frenzy of the late summer.⁵⁸

As Plancus was edging southward, fraternization between the Lepidan and Antonian armies increased. By May 27 or 28 he was ready to cross the Verdon, a tributary of the Durance and only 40 miles (= two days' march) from Pons Argenteus. A few days later he learned that, thanks to days of fraternization, Lepidus had lost control of his entire army and all had gone over to Antony on May 29. Plancus likely learned of this the next day when the combined armies advanced to within 20 miles of him; that same day Lepidus duly reported the news to Rome. Operations against Antony and on behalf of the *res publica* were clearly now impossible, the swollen army of his opponents far too close for comfort. It was time to change plans. Plancus retreated to the Isère, broke up his bridge, and moved on upstream to Cularo (Grenoble) to await the arrival of Decimus Brutus. He remained there at least through the end of July.⁵⁹

Decimus Brutus led his exhausted soldiers from near Aquae Statiellae on the Via Aemilia Scauri on May 6 over the Alps by the Little St. Bernard pass to avoid Antony and Lepidus and reached Cularo on the Isara on June 9. The full realization of Decimus' weakness must have been yet another cruel blow to Plancus. Disheartened at the condition of Brutus' army but not at his spirit, he nevertheless indicated a willingness to fight on,⁶⁰ but we may guess that this bold front was for the sake of appearance. For self-protection Plancus must have pondered how to avoid being left totally alone by engineering a shift to join Antony's large force. If widely known, his repeated professions of loyalty to the Republicans and enmity toward Antony, now only a short march away, compelled him to think and act carefully.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that by mid-May at the latest Lepidus intended to join Antony and Ventidius, that he deliberately did not maintain discipline in camp and permitted the infiltration of his ranks by Antonian agents.⁶¹ Had he been like Cato, once his cause was finished he would have saved his *dignitas* by committing suicide. That he did not suggests that he and Antony had worked out a deal before Lepidus' army "deserted." On the other hand, it may well be true that even under the best of circumstances he could not have kept control of his men: many soldiers on both sides were Caesarian veterans and saw no point in killing one another for the political advantage of their generals, and Lepidus' troops knew and respected Antony's generalship. Antony is reported not to have bothered to fortify his camp, another sign that he was well aware of how the wind was blowing. Lepidus shared rather than opposed the Caesarism of his men, but used it for an excuse: they walked out on him, so there was nothing he could do but surrender and hope Antony would spare him. After all, if he truly intended to fight Antony he could have marched north and hooked up with Plancus a few weeks earlier.

Instead, Lepidus tried to lure him downstream by requesting his cavalry in advance so that Plancus' army would not arrive as a single body, and by urging him to come quickly he hoped to win over Plancus before Decimus arrived with his army – Lepidus was probably no better or sooner informed as to Decimus' army than was Plancus. Lepidus may also have played on the ancient bonds of patron–client ties. All this perhaps helps explain the quarrel Plancus said he had with Lepidus. He admitted that he came close to walking into a trap, so Lepidus nearly succeeded.⁶² It also seems likely that Lepidus tried to exact a better deal with Antony by holding out as long as possible before joining him, perhaps demanding a second consulship as his price, which in fact he received in 42.

According to Cassius Dio, whose account of events in the spring and summer of 43 is muddled, at some time between the battle of Forum Gallorum and Lepidus' desertion to Antony – thus late April to late May – the Senate commissioned Lepidus and Plancus to found a colony at Lugdunum.⁶³ There is no hint of it in the letters of Plancus, Lepidus, or Cicero; in the Philippics; or in Appian. Given that these weeks were the height of the military crisis and the Senate was desperately hoping Plancus and Lepidus would combine against Antony, it makes no sense that the *patres* would have sidetracked the two governors by detailing them to conduct a colonial *deductio* (ritual foundation). Further, the location is within Comata, so there is no obvious reason why Lepidus would have left his own province and been made a partner in the *deductio*. Dio got the timing wrong. The foundation came in the fall and was the work of Plancus alone. Plancus commemorated his accomplishment on his epitaph at Caieta and struck coins celebrating Colonia Copia Munatia Felix. This name failed to stick, as Augustus subsequently reinforced the colony and the official name became Colonia Augusta Lugdunum.

Dio's error may be explicable if he got confused when compressing his narrative of this complicated period. He dated Pontius Aquila's defeat of T. Munatius Plancus Bursa to this same period. Cicero, however, referred to it in Philippic 11, delivered in late February or early March, and his contemporary account is to be regarded as correct. Dio may have postdated Bursa's demise so as to associate it with Aquila's death and posthumous commemoration.⁶⁴ The plan to found Lugdunum was probably on the senatorial agenda over the winter of 44–43, the colony an intended companion to Raurica founded the previous fall and the earlier Equestris. Dio antedated the *deductio* of Lugdunum and failed to realize that his account was probably incompatible with the Senate's refusal to deal with Lepidus after May 29, except to declare him a *hostis* on June 30. In late August the Lex Pedia lifted the decree of outlawry on Lepidus, and about then or a bit later Plancus joined him and Antony. A *senatus consultum* authorizing the colony would fall in September

and the foundation occur the next month.

Plancus joins Antony; Colonia Copia Munatia Felix Lugdunum: triumph December 29, 43

The Republican cause in the west deteriorated rapidly from the end of May. Now teamed up with Lepidus, Antony had a large and solidly Caesarian army. By early summer he and Octavian, whose soldiers were equally Caesarian, were in regular contact and working out a settlement of their differences. Octavian's ostentatious nonpursuit of Antony after the fighting at Mutina and his failure to block Ventidius were early signals of his thinking. Over the summer Octavian requested, was denied, and then obtained by force a consulship; he secured the other one for a cousin, Q. Pedius. His readiness to use strong-arm measures revealed him to be a tougher operator than Cicero and everybody else had realized, with the possible exception of M. Brutus.⁶⁵ And Octavian as consul had one advantage Antony could never offset: the magic name of Caesar.

For a time, Antony's concerns were more military than political. Three governors with armies faced him, though two could be disregarded: Asinius Pollio, who in spite of high-flown talk about coming to the aid of the Republic never left his province and joined Antony sometime over the summer,⁶⁶ and Decimus Brutus, whose army Antony knew was mostly of recruits and in no shape to continue the fight by itself. That left Plancus, who had a sizeable army which Brutus' men had joined shortly after Lepidus merged his army with Antony's. Together Plancus and Brutus had fifteen legions and were strong in cavalry and had unlimited access to Gallic auxiliaries, thanks to the former's hard work at recruiting. Antony's army was about the same size: four of his own legions, seven of Lepidus', and soon three of Pollio's.⁶⁷ No reinforcements were to be expected. All these legions were likely at well under full strength and had a large proportion of recruits. If we guess 4500 men per legion, Plancus and Brutus had perhaps 67,500 troops and Antony plus Lepidus roughly 63,000; the number of auxiliaries is unknown.

From Antony's perspective, Plancus was an enigma and a dangerous disappointment requiring careful treatment. Whose side was he on? He looked to be a hesitant Republican, but Antony could not be sure. In the winter he had been willing to cede his province to Antony as part of the diplomatic efforts to prevent war, but then seemed to have changed and become a traitor to Caesar's legacy. (So were Hirtius and Pansa; but dead, they were out of the picture.) He had not heeded Antony's earlier enticements, had refused to listen to some of his messengers, had arrested at least one of them,⁶⁸ and had – albeit

tentatively – marched against him in May (as Pollio had not): this in a person Antony had claimed as *particeps consiliorum*. No surprise that Antony proclaimed his intentions of dealing with Plancus personally,⁶⁹ though again tough talk may have been for public consumption and to the Senate, and his communications with Plancus more conciliatory. Antony did not need more enemies than he knew he faced, as Brutus and Cassius were raising vast numbers of soldiers in the east. Better to work out a deal with Plancus, though the terms would require care.

For his part, Plancus was surely concerned over the turn of events, though in his letters to Cicero he was suitably republican.⁷⁰ The Senate had never acted to win the allegiance of his soldiers by providing land grants for them, which Plancus knew from his service with Caesar was a chief demand of the veterans. In this, he was at odds with Cicero, who throughout his career opposed all agrarian laws and provisions to help the poor, whether soldiers or civilians. He did not relish an alliance with Decimus, a turncoat Caesarian, and he knew he could not expect any additional troops or help from any quarter. Two legions from Africa, supposedly on the way, never showed up.⁷¹ Plancus wrote Octavian repeatedly and sent his legate Furnius to him, and Octavian repeatedly said he was coming but did not move, and it was soon obvious that he had no intention of assisting the anti-Caesarian army.

At the end of July Plancus, still professing loyalty to the Senate's cause, confided to Cicero that they had misjudged Octavian, who was to blame for Antony's escape and subsequent merger with Lepidus. Had Octavian come promptly when he first said he would, they could have finished off the war or driven Antony to Spain.⁷² Plancus claimed he had treated Octavian with respect, both because of the *familiaritas* and *amicitia* between himself and the late dictator and because he first judged Octavian of a "*moderatissimus atque humanissimus sensus*." By midsummer Plancus knew otherwise: the young Caesar did not have such a "moderate and kind disposition."

The letter continued: if there was to be any hope at all of defeating Antony, Cicero and Octavian's *necessarii* must apply themselves industriously and swiftly to gain Octavian's support. He knew that Octavian was pressing for the consulship, which he got three weeks later, but he professed not to understand why Octavian wanted it so insistently. Plancus was only maintaining appearances when he told Cicero that if the African legions and/or Octavian came quickly, he and Brutus would soon bring the war to a conclusion. This letter was written two months after Lepidus joined Antony, and Pollio may have gone along as well. Letters or oral messages from Antony probably reported that Octavian would shortly do likewise, which would add his legions to Antony's fifteen and give him a decided numerical superiority. Decimus and Plancus drew the same conclusion but acted differently. Plancus was now all

alone in the west, in danger of being “hung out to dry”; he needed to reconcile with Antony before it became too late. Brutus left Plancus and fled eastward, attempting to reach Marcus Brutus and Cassius in the east. He was caught and killed by a Gallic chieftain. One wonders if Plancus, who had developed good relations with the Gauls of the southeast of his province, arranged for the capture and execution. There is no hint of this in the sources, but it would have been a good bargaining point with Antony.

In the late summer Plancus turned over his army to Antony, who held no grudges from the political bluster of the previous months. He welcomed Plancus’ abilities against Octavian and honored Caesar’s promises. We know nothing of how the transfer was arranged, but Pollio served as middleman in the negotiations. Antony guaranteed Plancus his consulship against any objections (Octavian?) and similarly rewarded Lepidus: he would replace Decimus Brutus as Plancus’ colleague in 42. There could be no doubt that the incoming consuls were Antony’s men. This was one of two major turning points in Plancus’ career, the other coming a decade later when he abandoned Antony. As Jullien remarked in 1892 of the move in 42, the decision to join Antony “marked not only the start of a new alliance but of a new life.”⁷³ All Antonians were rightly suspicious of Octavian.⁷⁴

Lepidus accompanied Antony to Italy and in November served as middleman between him and Octavian in the creation of the Second Triumvirate. Plancus stayed in Comata through the autumn and around October 10 conducted the *deductio* of Lugdunum as *Copia Munatia Felix*. Whether or not the Senate had originally intended that Plancus and Lepidus should share the honors, Lepidus was no longer on the scene and thus Plancus could monopolize the credit on his epitaph.⁷⁵ Unless he left early and entrusted the province to a temporary fill-in as Hirtius had done in 44, for which there is no evidence, Plancus remained in Gaul until relieved by L. Varius Cotta in late October or November.⁷⁶ By late December Plancus was in Rome, where he celebrated a triumph on December 29, two days ahead of Lepidus *ex Hispania*. He thus shared the stage as he would the *fasces* with Lepidus.

The colony’s original name did not endure, as Augustus reinforced/refounded it, and in imperial times there was no allusion to Plancus as *conditor*. From its birth Lugudnum was more than a military strongpoint, a *propugnaculum imperii*. From his years in Gaul, Plancus was likely aware of the site’s potential for commercial prosperity, implied in the *Copia* (“wealth, abundance”) of the original name; the Rhone and Saône were already well-established avenues of trade with easy access to the Loire, Seine, and Rhine. Under Augustus Lugdunum became the hub of a network of roads radiating through Gaul and also the home of the Imperial Cult.

The death of L. Plautius Plancus

While Plancus was in Gaul his brother was caught up in a crisis at Rome. When Octavian failed at first to get his consulship by request, he resorted to physical extortion. Once again the Senate found out that moral suasion and words were no defense against an army. For a time the Senate tried to appease Octavian by giving him everything he demanded. Then it reversed course and resolved to defend itself as best it could with the three legions on hand while awaiting rescue from Plancus and Decimus Brutus. This was a fatal miscalculation, born of desperation not reason; how the senators expected Plancus and Brutus to defeat Antony and Lepidus and then march quickly to Rome to save the Senate from Octavian is nowhere explained – because it was impossible. The praetors, Plautius Plancus among them, were placed in command of the troops in the city. When the legions which had just arrived from Africa went over to Octavian, the *praetor urbanus* Cornutus committed suicide, but the others declared for Octavian. The following day the praetors and Cicero foolishly chose to believe a rumor that Octavian's men were deserting him and once again determined to resist. The rumor quickly was proved false, and Octavian at first pardoned the praetors “in order to acquire a reputation for clemency. But not long afterwards they were put on the list of the proscribed.”⁷⁷

Plautius Plancus fled southward but was caught and killed at Salernum. A most improbable version of his end, as fanciful as any melodrama and worthy of inclusion in Appian's collection of harrowing tales of adventure relating to escape from and capture by the triumvirs' agents, is that his strong perfume gave away his hiding place. Velleius, rarely missing an opportunity to be hostile to Plancus, records that Plancus had his brother's name put on the list.⁷⁸ Velleius has often been accepted, but there is no trace anywhere of animosity between the brothers. More probably, Velleius was trying to cover up the guilt of the future Augustus, whose ruthlessness all through the 40s and 30s is well known. It is known from various sources that when the lists of the proscribed were drawn up, several names were included with the knowledge that they would be let off. Lepidus saw to it that his brother Paullus and Antony his uncle L. Julius Caesar went free. Plancus may have arranged Plautius Plancus' escape, but the plan failed perhaps because the agents did not follow instructions and figured that Antony would rejoice at the execution of all friends of Cicero.

Precisely what happened to the fugitive praetor is beyond knowing. Execution at Salernum can be accepted, particularly if we assume that Plautius Plancus was attempting to flee overseas. He may have calculated that the triumviral killers would be keeping a close watch for him around his home

area of Caieta-Formiae and tried to escape from an alternative port. Unfortunately, he was recognized and put to death. How perfume got into the story is puzzling and trivial, and may be pure invention. It was in any case an early element, as it appears in Valerius Maximus writing under Tiberius.⁷⁹

The important item is that Octavian, not Plancus, bears responsibility for the death of the praetor. Plautius had worked steadily with the Senate and his old friend Cicero and had opposed the young Caesar. Octavian's harshness confirmed Plancus in his allegiance to Antony, to whom he remained attached for the next eleven years.

Notes

- 1 See Gelzer 1968, 198–99; Brunt 1986, 26–32; and e.g. Caesar, *BC* 1.9–11.
- 2 See Adcock 1955, 102–05; Shackleton Bailey, *Phil.* 107: Cicero “neither respected nor trusted Hirtius and Pansa but later admitted their loyalty.”
- 3 Shackleton Bailey slips in calling him Pansa's “son-in-law,” *Phil.* 147. Pansa married Fufia and is thus *gener*; cf. *Phil.* 8.19 and 251 note 1. Sumner 1971, 259 for Calenus' career: praetor in 59, so born by 99 and only a year younger than Caesar, but far older than Pansa. Brunt 1989, 362–63. Cicero had disliked him since 61: *Phil.* 8.13–16; *Att.* 16.11.1 = SB 420; *Phil.* 5.6; 12.1–2 and 18 for closeness to Antony and Piso.
- 4 See F. Millar 1964, 52–5; and Bosworth 1988, 94–9. Calenus' response in Dio is drawn from various sources: 45.18–46.28. Cf. Frisch 1946, 169–83.
- 5 App. 3.49–60; *Phil.* 5.1.
- 6 *Phil.* 5.5–6; *Att.* 14.14 = SB 368.
- 7 *Phil.* 7.2–3; 8.26–7. Cf. Plancus in *Fam.* 10.8.6 = SB 371: “*Sum animo paratus ire quo res p. vocet vel tradere exercitum, auxilia provinciamque.*”
- 8 *Phil.* 6.3–4 and 16; 7.14.
- 9 *Phil.* 10.3 (Calenus alone); 6.4–5; 7.26; 9.9 seem to credit Sulpicius Rufus with the motion. Piso: *Caes.*, *BC* 1.3.
- 10 The MSS at 6.10 are corrupt and Cicero not clear as to the identity of the persons. See Shackleton Bailey, *Phil.* 188–91; 1988, 71. He is not the T. Munatius of *Fam.* 10.12.2, 5 = SB 378, of whom Cicero spoke favorably and who was with Plancus.
- 11 *Phil.* 7.1, 14; 12.13. *Fam.* 12.5.2 = SB 365 for the weather.
- 12 *Phil.* 7.3; cf. 12.13.
- 13 *Fam.* 10.5 = SB 359, a reply to 10.4 = SB 358. Walser apparently dates the letter before *Phil.* 3 on December 20. Cicero feared interception: cf. Nicholson 1994, 41–2; on 54 he wrongly has this letter going to Cnaeus Plancius: *Fam.* 12.5 = SB 465. See also *Phil.* 12.13.
- 14 “*Incumbas*” in sec. 2 echoes “*incumbe*” in 10.3.3 = SB 355, itself recalling “*incumberes*” in 10.1.2 = SB 340. So, too, the reminder of “*fortuna et tempora*” in his career to date picks up on “*nimis servire temporibus*” from that same letter. Similar terms in *Fam.* 12.24 = SB 361, to Cornificius.
- 15 *Fam.* 10.1.2 and 3.2 = SB 340, 355. Plancus used this theme in 10.4 = SB 358.
- 16 *Phil.* 8 on February 4; *Phil.* 9, a eulogy for Sulpicius Rufus, in the middle of the month; 10 a week or so later; and 11 by early March. Cf. Frisch 1946, 239; Bailey, *Phil.* 269 and *Comm.*

- on *Fam.* 2.506.
- 17 Cicero was scornful: *Fam.* 12.4 = SB 363 (“*nihil foedius nihil flagitiosus*” than the envoys); *Phil.* 8.17–21, 256–28, 32; App. 3.62f.; Dio 46.29–31.
- 18 *Phil.* 8.1; 13.22–5, 37, 43–6, on March 20. Cf. Pollio on Lepidus and Antony: *Fam.* 10.31a = SB 368; Dec. Brutus’ capture of letters, *Fam.* 11.11 = SB 366.
- 19 *Phil.* 8.1–7, 11, 20.
- 20 *Phil.* 10; Dio 46.29.6 and 32.2 (quote); App. 3.63.
- 21 *Fam.* 10.6 = SB 370; cf. Nicholson, 1994, 41–2.
- 22 *Phil.* 11, esp. secs. 15–40.
- 23 *Phil.* 12.13; *Fam.* 10.8.6 = SB 371.
- 24 *Fam.* 12.7 = SB 367.
- 25 *Phil.* 12.4; Caes., *BC* 1.7.7 and 9.2.
- 26 *Phil.* 11.17.
- 27 *Phil.* 13.22–5, 43–4.
- 28 *Fam.* 10.27 and 10.6 = SB 369 and 370. Weigel 1992, 53–66.
- 29 *Fam.* 10.31.4 = SB 368. Lepidus “*contionaretur atque omnibus scribet se consentire cum Antonio*.” Pollio relied on contact by land as the sea was still closed over the winter. Carcopino, *Cicero, Secrets of his Corresp.* 514–15 damns *Fam.* 10.31 as “a tissue of humbug, wile and reticence.” Bosworth is fairer: 197; cf. Nicholson 1994, 55.
- 30 Frisch 1946, 252–55 has isolated as much of the basic letter as Cicero cared to quote. How selective and distorted were the excerpts? Stockton 1971, 313–14: Antony aimed his remarks at “unhappy Caesarians in the Senate, Caesar’s loyal veterans, everybody who dreaded the revival of the old Republic.” See Shackleton Bailey, *Phil.* 321 and *Comm.* on *Fam.* 10.6 = SB 370.
- 31 *Fam.* 10.27 = SB 369; cf. *Phil.* 5.38–40; 13.2–3, 28 (rabble), and 7–21 (Lepidus).
- 32 *Phil.* 13.36–7 (“*Gallia ultima*”), 40–2.
- 33 *Fam.* 10.30, 34 = SB 378 and 396; Dio 46.38.6–7; 50.3 and 51.3; *MRR* 2.353.
- 34 Dispatch: *Fam.* 10.8 = SB 371, with a copy to M. Brutus, *ad M. Br.* 2 (2.3) = SB 3. Letter: *Fam.* 10.7 = SB 372; received in Rome: *Fam.* 10.12 = SB 377.
- 35 Plancus claimed five legions (sec. 6) but had four in late July (10.24.3 = SB 428). Appian gives him three, Lepidus four, and Pollio two in the fall of 44 (3.46), but then assigns Lepidus three more in the spring of 43 (3.97). In Brunt’s opinion (1971, 478–88), Appian reports only what they turned over to Antony and he took to Italy, so the others stayed behind as provincial garrisons.
- 36 *Phil.* 12 (early March) shows Cicero’s worries about a change in senatorial opinion. See Frisch 1946, 237–47; Shackleton Bailey, *Phil.* 299 remarks “Evidently something was going on behind the scenes, a final effort to avoid full-scale conflict.”
- 37 App. 3.62–4; Dio 46.33.
- 38 *Fam.* 10.8, 31, 33 = SB 368, 409, 371.
- 39 App. 3.66; Dio 46.37.1–38.2; Plut., *Ant.* 17; Cic., *ad M. Br.* 9 (1.9) = B7; *Fam.* 10.30 = SB 378.
- 40 App. 3.71–84; Dio 46.38–40; *Phil.* 43–53. Note Decimus to Cicero in *Fam.* 11.9–10 = SB 380, 385. *ILLRP* 419–21 for the tombs of Hirtius and Pansa; cf. Livy, *Per.* 119; Vell. 2.62.4; Val. Max. 5.2.10; *ad M. Br.* 9 (1.3), 10 (1.3a) and 23 (1.15) = SB 7, 8, 24. Appian makes Antony a *hostis* sooner than was the case (3.51, 58, 63); *adversarius* in January but not *hostis* until late April. See *MRR* 2.342–43.

- 41 *Fam.* 10.9.3 = SB 379 and 10.11.2 = SB 382 a few days later. Shackleton Bailey, *Comm.* 2.524. Rivet 1988, 75–7: a march up the Isère to Gap, Sisteron, Riez, and the Verdon.
- 42 The area is now known as Fourvière, derived from Forum Vetus.
- 43 Pollio was less important: his army was smaller (two legions) and he was farther away, in Hispania Ulterior. As we will see, he joined Antony ahead of Plancus and then eased the way for Plancus to do the same.
- 44 *Ad M. Br.* 10 (1.3a) = SB 8; Dio 46.39–49; App. 3.73–6, 82–98, summarizing events into September. Octavian was only deluding Cicero by proposing that he and Cicero should be consuls together. For all his lapses into the Bacchanalian lifestyle Antony was courageous and a good leader in adversity: see Pelling 1988, 161–62, 232–41.
- 45 App. 3.80–1; Dio 46.41–3, 50.
- 46 *Phil.* 13.44.
- 47 *Fam.* 11.11 = SB 386.
- 48 *Fam.* 11. 23 = SB 401 for Cicero’s pithy remark that Octavian should be “elevated, decorated, and removed.”
- 49 *Fam.* 10.23.5 = SB 414 (June 6).
- 50 *Fam.* 11.9 = SB 380. Shackleton Bailey renders *ventosissimus* as “arrant weather-cock”, i.e. shifts with the wind.
- 51 Pollio: *Fam.* 10.31.4 and 10.33 = SB 368, 409. Hostility to Lepidus: *ad M. Br.* 2 (1); 21 (1.13) = SB 3 and 21; cf. *Fam.* 10.20 = SB 407 to Plancus.
- 52 *Fam.* 10.9.3 and 10.11.2–3 = SB 379, 382, dated April 27 and about May 1. Plancus awaited Brutus in the upper Isère valley, as he was coming via the Little St. Bernard pass.
- 53 *Fam.* 10.15.1; 10.21.5; 10.18.2 and 10.23.1 = SB 390, 395, 391, and 414.
- 54 *Fam.* 10.21.4 = SB 391; *litterae* at 10.19 = SB 393. Cicero’s encouragement: *Fam.* 10.14, 13, 19, 16 and 20 = SB 384, 389, 393, 404 and 407. The penultimate urges Plancus to be his own Senate, a term Cicero has used to others, as 11.7 = SB 354 to Dec. Brutus.
- 55 *Fam.* 10.34 = SB 396. Rivet 1988, 75 puts Forum Voconii at Les Blais; Weigel 1992, 58 opts for Le Canet. Shackleton Bailey, *Comm.* 2.537 says it “is somewhere on the coast between Aquae Sextiae (Aix) and Forum Julii (Frejus). The exact location is uncertain.” Forum Voconii is not on the coast but some ways up the Argenteus from Forum Julii. See the *Barrington Atlas of Greek and Roman World*, map 16, B3.
- 56 To Cicero: *Fam.* 10.15 = SB 390, about May 11, cf. 10.21 = SB 391 on May 15. Writing to Plancus on May 15 (10.20 = SB 407), Cicero said Decimus had relayed information from Plancus about Lepidus’ resistance to Antony.
- 57 *Fam.* 10.17, 34a, 11.25 = SB 398, 400, 402. Dyson argued that Plancus followed the Argenteus through Aquae Sextiae (Aix en Provence): *Making of the Roman Frontier* 151 citing *Fam.* 10.17; Strabo 4.6.4; Pliny, *NH* 3.37. See also *Fam.* 10.23 = SB 414: on May 27 or 28 he was ready to cross the Verdon, a tributary of the Durance.
- 58 *Fam.* 10.21a and 17.2 = SB 392 and 398; App. 3.93f. Plautius Plancus and Cicero cooperated on Plancus’ behalf over the summer: *Fam.* 10.22 = B 423.
- 59 *Fam.* 10.23 = SB 414, dated June 6. Lepidus’ dispatch: *Fam.* 10.35 = SB 408. May 30. See also App. 3.93–4; Dio 46.42 and 50–2. *Fam.* 10.28: Plancus still at Cularo on July 28. He is next attested in Rome where he triumphed on December 29: *MRR* 2.348. Lepidus a *hostis*: *Fam.* 12.10 = SB 425; cf. *ad M. Br.* 29 (2.12), 22 (1.14) and 23 (1.15) = SB 22, 23, 24.
- 60 *Fam.* 10.23 = SB 414, written June 6 and stating he expected Decimus in three days. Cf. 11.11 = SB 386; 11.13a = SB 418 on June 10. For Brutus’ army: 10.24, 11.1, and 11.20.4 = SB

- 428, 399, and 401.
- 61 Weigel 1992, 59–63. Huzar 1978, 112: Lepidus’ and Plancus’ armies camped on the Argenteus: they never joined, so unless she means their camps were some miles apart but both along the river, she is wrong. On suicide and remaining true to ancestral “aristocratic ethos,” see Rosenstein 1990.
- 62 *Fam.* 10.23.5 = SB 414. Any ill will between the two seems not to have been permanent: they got along together as consuls in 42, and it is argued later that there was a subsequent marriage tie between the two families.
- 63 Dio’s chronology in 46.37–52 is confused. He puts Octavian’s march on Rome several months too early (43–6), as it belongs in August. *MRR* 2.336–37 and Dio 46.50.4–6 for the colony.
- 64 Dio 46.38.3 and 46.40.2; Cic., *Phil.* 11.14.
- 65 *MRR* 2.236–37. For Brutus’ criticism: *ad M.Br.* 12 (1.4) = SB 11; 17 (1.7) = SB 17; 23 (1.15) = SB 24; 24 (1.16) = SB 25; and 26 (1.18) = SB 26 for Cicero’s realization that he was unable to control Octavian. See also Clarke 1981, 50–60; Bellen 1985, esp. 178–80.
- 66 *Fam.* 10.31 (March 16), 33 (early June) and 32 (June 8) = SB 368, 409, 415, all from Corduba. Cf. App. 3.93–4; Bosworth 1972.
- 67 *Fam.* 10.24 and 11.13a = SB 428, 418. Plancus had four legions and Brutus eleven, but one of his and eight of Brutus’ were of inexperienced men. Brunt 1971, 480–85 gives Plancus five legions and Brutus ten, either way their army was fifteen legions. Brunt assigns four to Antony, seven to Lepidus, and three to Pollio: fourteen in total. Huzar 1978, 112 is wildly off: 156,000 men in twenty-three legions.
- 68 *Fam.* 10.23.5 = SB 414.
- 69 *Phil.* 13.43–4.; App. 3.96–7.
- 70 Cf. *Fam.* 10.26 = SB 424.
- 71 App. 3.85 and 91, two legions transferred from T. Sextius. Sextius had a career similar to Plancus’ but about one year slower: Sumner 1971, 360–61 and Gasco 1984.
- 72 *Fam.* 10.24 = SB 428, dated July 28. App. 3.96 for the death of Decimus. In revenge, Marcus Brutus executed Antony’s captured brother Caius: App. 3.79; Dio 47.21.4–24.4. Cicero feared that Plancus was wavering: *ad M.Br.* 22 (1.14) = SB 23.
- 73 App. 3.96–9. The passage assigns to Plancus ten legions (six of recruits), in contrast to Plancus’ own letter of July 28; cf. Vell. 2.64f.; Livy, *Per.* 120; Dio 46.53; Val. Max. 4.7.9 and 9.13.3.
- 74 See Jullien 1892, 127: the decision to join Antony “ne marque seulement le commencement d’une nouvelle alliance, mais d’une nouvelle vie”; cf. 91; Perrochat 1957, at 183; Carter 1970, 86–7; Bosworth 1972.
- 75 Dio 46.50.4–6 is anticipatory as discussed earlier. Epitaph: “*In Gallia colonias deduxit Lugdunum et Rauricam.*” See Jullien 1892, 100, 122; Vittinghoff 1951, 67–9; and the chronological reconstruction and fuller discussion by Audin 1965. He points to Caesar’s supply base on the site in the 50s, used by Plancus and Lepidus in 44–3, and dates the original SC between April 18 and May 14. Plancus joined Antony in September and carried out the *deductio* on October 9. Numismatic evidence for the original name (Colonia Copia Munatia Felix) on pp. 28–58. *MRR* 3.146: the formal foundation on October 11. Rivet 1988, 76: Raurica and Lugdunum were founded “late in 44 or early in 43.” For the city’s later importance: Drinkwater 1975, 135–40 and 1983, 111–21, 124–25. Audin 1986, chap. 5 “Onomastique” for a few Munatii among later inhabitants. Seneca, *Apocol.* 6.1 labels Claudius, born at Lugdunum in 10 BC, a “municeps Munati.”

- 76 Cotyla: Plut., *Ant.* 18.4; cf. Dio 46.34; Cic., *Phil.* 5.5–7; 8.24–33. Brunt 1971, 493: six legions stayed in Gaul, pointing to Roman worries about the provincial peace.
- 77 App. 3.88–94; cf. 4.12.
- 78 Pliny, *NH* 13.25; Val. Max. 6.8.5 (with *praenomen* of Caius, probably his name before adoption by a Plautius, as afterwards he was Lucius); Vell 2.67.4; Dio 54.2 does not make Plancus responsible. Pliny mislabels Plotius Plancus' brother as "the consul" (wrong unless he is dating the tale to 42).
- 79 Accepting Velleius, Jullien 1892, 129–30; D'Arms 1981, 66, 75, and 80. My speculative effort to get behind the sources' distortion is no more fanciful than the bare story itself. Plautius Plancus' natural and adoptive families were involved in commerce, including trade in perfume beyond Italy and used Salernum as one port. Plautius attempted to flee on one of his family's ships but was discovered and reported, perhaps by the slaves or dockhands seeking bounties. In other words, the family business in perfume, not scents on his body, gave him away. D'Arms observes a Plotius *unguentarius* at Puteoli and a freedman L. Plotius Philippus at Capua and Delos (1981, 80, citing *Att.* 11.46.3 = SB 338; *CIL* 10.4289). These two Plotii might be family agents in the perfume and cosmetics business. See T. Frank, *Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore, 1939) 1.174 and 5.134.

6 Plancus the Antonian: late 43–mid 32

Prominent Antonians

From the autumn of 43 Plancus was an adherent of Antony and by 36 his chief subordinate. Three of Antony's highest-ranking affiliates in these years were *nobiles* of much greater *dignitas* than the *novus et municipalis* Plancus. Two were patricians, which opened the consulship to them at age 33 or 34: Paullus Aemilius Lepidus (suff. 34, nephew of the triumvir Marcus) and M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus (cos. 31). The third, Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, was consul in 32, a few years early for a plebeian.¹ Antony and Plancus were very close to the same age, born about 84, and were more than a decade senior to the others, but Antony as the leading triumvir and a consular was, of course, the superior. From 42 Plancus was also a consular. The three nobles illustrate how political alliances shifted throughout this volatile period and put Plancus in perspective: all abandoned Antony for Octavian. A brief survey of their careers reveals their high standing. Equally to be remembered, however, is that these nobles socially far outranked Plancus, so his career ought not to be compared with theirs and found wanting. Plancus belongs to the next tier down, but a search for approximate equals, say among former Caesarian partisans and legates, fails to turn up anybody. As this chapter will demonstrate, Plancus stands alone; his success and prominence are without parallel.

Ahenobarbus was born about 70 into a family which had produced consuls in consecutive generations since 192, alternating Lucius and Cnaeus as the chosen *praenomen* for the oldest son. His father Lucius, an unrelenting enemy of Caesar, died at Pharsalus in 48; his mother Porcia was Cato's sister. An improbable ally of Antony by parentage, Ahenobarbus ultimately came to prefer Antony to Octavian as the lesser of the two evils; many other senators felt the same. A Republican at first, two years after Philippi he joined Antony. Marriage to an Aemilia tied him to the Aemilii Lepidi. A later betrothal cemented the political affiliation, as Cnaeus pledged his son Lucius, a boy of twelve, to Antony's daughter, then a toddler of one or two, in 37. He governed Bithynia from 40 to 34 and was consul in 32. He has been characterized as "arguably Antony's most distinguished supporter, [a] proud Republican ... resolute and incorruptible ... as straight-spined as Plancus was invertebrate."²

He hated Cleopatra but stayed with Antony until shortly before Actium and died soon after switching allegiance. In 22 his son sought to humiliate Plancus, then censor, and became consul in 16.³

Paullus Aemilius Lepidus was likely three years younger than Domitius and for a time his brother-in-law. His uncle was the triumvir Marcus Lepidus, Plancus' consular colleague in 42 but out of power from 36, so Paullus got little help from him. His father Lucius was consul in 50 and had been won to a benevolent neutrality by Caesar's money. It is not known when he changed and went over to Octavian, but his descent alone guaranteed him the suffect consulship in 34.

M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus was among the most aristocratic of Romans, as the Valerian pedigree went back to the earliest days of the Republic. He was born in 65, making him one of Antony's younger high-ranking allies. As did Domitius, he joined Antony in the aftermath of Philippi in 42. He changed loyalties and joined Octavian by 36, since he was on the Naulochus campaign. Once with Octavian he was a firm and valued ally and prospered politically. He and Agrippa had joint tenancy of Antony's house on the Palatine, and the consulship in 31 was a reward. He held various high offices over the next fifteen to twenty years and died at age 72 in AD 8. He was famous for his ability to shift political alliances and come out ahead. His boast "I have always been on the better and juster side" in anyone of a less illustrious family would be disparaged as *nimis servire temporibus*. He and Plancus employed their oratorical skills in the service of the new order: Plancus proposed "Augustus" in 27, and in 2 Messalla moved for the honorific "Pater Patriae."⁴

Another noble might be added to this list, L. Calpurnius Piso "Pontifex." Born in 47 to Caesar's father-in-law Piso Caesoninus, the consul of 58, he was obviously too young to hold office or command under Antony in the 30s. His (half-?) sister Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, was some twenty-five years older than he, so his unknown mother was likely his father's second wife. Caesoninus is not heard of after 43, so Piso evidently became head of the family at a young age, and his adherence will have added a bit of luster to Antony's following. Piso moved into Octavian's camp before Actium. Any head of a distinguished noble family was always guaranteed a welcome from the young Caesar. Like Messalla, he prospered under the early Principate and died at age seventy-nine in AD 32.⁵

Plancus, Lepidus, Messalla, Ahenobarbus, and Piso all served Antony for a time and eventually left him. Of the five, Plancus stayed by his side the longest and was with him almost constantly from 41. He had greater knowledge of Antony's plans, strengths, and weaknesses than did any of the others, and this familiarity made his shift of allegiance of great practical value. Self-preservation surely contributed to his decision to abandon him in 32. He

calculated that war with Octavian was inevitable and that Antony would lose. The same sense of personal interests had been at work in 43 when he had joined Antony after calculating that the Republicans were going to lose. This shift, no less than that of 43, marked a new phase in his career.

Triumph, consulship, proscriptions; land distribution near Beneventum; Perusine War

The *Fasti Triumphales* record two triumphs at the end of December 43: Plancus on December 29, *ex Gallia (ex Raetis* on his epitaph), and Lepidus two days later *ex Hispania*.⁶ The hostile Velleius says that the *triumphatores*' soldiers sang "*de Germanis, non de Gallis duo triumphant consules*," punning on the double meaning of *germanus* as "full brother" and "German," to allude to the rumor that the generals had proscribed their brothers. This report is more than doubtful. That marching soldiers sang the same ditty at triumphs two days apart seems unlikely, as the gallows humor would fall flat. Nor did the composer bother with historical accuracy: Plancus had not yet been consul, and neither celebrant had either defeated Germans or proscribed his brother.

The ancient writers concentrated on the high drama of 43–40 and were almost silent about the consuls' activities at Rome in 42: the proscriptions, the campaign at Philippi, Antony's celebrated meeting with Cleopatra at Tarsus in the winter of 41, and the strife which erupted around Italy by early 41 were far more exciting reading than administrative routine and grim confiscations.⁷ Nobody paid much attention to Plancus. He may not have been formally elected consul at all, as the triumvirs simply confirmed Caesar's earlier appointments.⁸ Whether Octavian opposed Plancus because of his actions in 43 but yielded to Antony's desires is not on record.

Lepidus was the more important of the consuls, a patrician holding his second consulship (the first in 46), a former Master of the Horse (46 and 44) to Caesar as dictator, and as triumvir theoretically the equal of Antony and Octavian. His partners placed him in general charge of Rome and Italy with a garrison of three legions while they set out for Macedonia to confront the army of the Liberators.⁹ In fact, however, he was already decidedly the least of the three, as when the western lands were distributed "Lepidus received nothing because of suspicions about his loyalty. The particular charge laid against Lepidus is that he had been secretly dealing with [Sextus] Pompeius specifically."¹⁰ Antony may have quietly instructed his man Plancus to keep an eye on Lepidus, an assignment which would have kept Plancus out of the limelight. His duties and activities as consul are otherwise almost unknown. Plancus must have assisted in the deification of Julius Caesar on January 1,

taken the oath to uphold Caesar's *acta*, and been involved in the celebration of Caesar's birthday on July 12. The consuls sponsored a law on grants of citizenship and immunity, the *Lex Munatia Aemilia*.¹¹ Consular legislation indicates that the triumvirs were at least nominally respecting traditional procedures and not ruling exclusively through decree.¹² It is also interesting in putting Plancus' name ahead of Lepidus'. General administrative tasks could have included recruitment of troops and acquisition of supplies for the huge army of Antony and Octavian. He probably began reconstruction of the Temple of Saturn at this time, *ex manubiis* from the Raetian war, though he did not complete the project until the 20s.

As triumvir, Lepidus had the primary responsibility for the supervision of the massive proscriptions, seizure and sale of properties, adjudication of countless appeals by the proscribed or their relatives, control of unauthorized acts of brutality by soldiers, and the preliminary arrangements for appropriation of land from eighteen cities of Italy to be distributed to veterans of the triumviral army on their return. Several incidents condemn him for cruelty, but none so much as even mention Plancus. He was not involved in the appeal of "Turia" to save her proscribed husband and the family property, whereas Lepidus out of anger toward Octavian blocked a pardon granted by him.¹³ In the absence of evidence, there is no way of knowing the extent of Plancus' involvement in the proscriptions and the compilation of Italian cities which would suffer confiscation of lands to be given to veterans. He listed distribution of lands at Beneventum on his epitaph, a task possibly begun in 42 but which mostly belongs to 41–40. He is named as granting amnesty to two persons at the specific request of Antony, and he may be the unnamed consul ordered to check worst of the proscriptional excesses.¹⁴

Instability and social misery worsened as the crisis brought on by the assassination of Caesar in 44 spread and solution retreated. At the time, Philippi did not appear as decisive as it became in retrospect: the battles had eliminated a number of leading figures in 42, but not the cause for which they fought. Victory in combat gave the Caesarians political mastery at Rome, but their dominance was tenuous, limited, and hated. The victorious triumvirs did not trust one another, and each schemed to advance his own goals. New rivals, claiming loyalty to the ancient forms of the state, replaced the fallen Brutus and Cassius, and by their successes in recruiting supporters among and provincials of all classes demonstrated the continuing vitality of "republicanism." The late 40s and early 30s were years of political confusion, uprooting of countless people, and loss of property due to confiscations and settlement of discharged veterans, widespread food shortages accompanied by riots, bitter propaganda, and serious fighting. Italy suffered grievously, and Octavian got much of the blame. Antony was dominant, but his lack of

decisive leadership, steadfast absence from Italy, and then the disastrous campaign against Parthia in 36 quickly weakened him. In the meantime, Lepidus began the decline from which he never recovered. He lost the legions and provinces which he had had and was soon shipped off to Africa: from now on he was effectively isolated.¹⁵

At the time of the Perusine War Lepidus was pretty well out of the picture in Africa and Antony (according to romantic and propagandizing accounts) withdrew to the pleasures of Cleopatra's Alexandria in 41–40. Whether he was as ignorant of or indifferent toward the crisis building around the empire may perhaps be doubted, but he failed to exhibit the decisive leadership that could be expected of a *triumvir rei publicae constituendae*, triumvir with the duty of reestablishing the state.

Plancus was in a good position to observe the frequent shifts in power in these years. The rapid decline of Lepidus may have been surprising, even saddening. Nominally the equal of his triumviral partners, Lepidus was in fact inferior to them from the start. He had nearly lured Plancus into a trap in May 43 when he lost control of his army to Antony (probably collusion rather than failure to control) and had behaved harshly as consul. From 41 he was in virtual exile in Africa, where he doubtless brooded about his reduction in power and probably sought some opportunity to regain it. When he made his move in 36 he failed, and from then on he was out of politics. Plancus transferred his loyalty to Antony in mid-43, and by 41 knew that Lepidus could no longer be a useful patron. He had no reason to like or trust Octavian, who had never lived up to his promises of assistance in 43 and bore some responsibility for the death in proscription of Plancus' brother at Salernum. Plancus' steady loyalty to Caesar 54–44 ruled out any affinity for Sextus Pompeius. In short, Plancus was solidly Antony's man.

This need not mean that he severed all ties with the Aemilii Lepidi. The consul of 50, L. Aemilius Paullus Lepidus, survived the proscriptions and retired to Miletus where he lived his final years in obscurity. His son, Paullus Aemilius Lepidus, changed course during the civil strife and, as noted earlier, joined Octavian in time to receive a suffect consulship in 34. In 22 he was censor with Plancus and may have married a daughter to Plancus' son. Paullus Lepidus' first wife was evidently Sempronia, sister of his consular colleague L. Sempronius Atratinus. Sempronius followed Paullus, as he was with Antony until at least 36 and then switched to Octavian. His drum-shaped mausoleum is of similar dimensions (though poorly preserved) and close to Plancus' at Caieta.¹⁶ It seems possible that the Sempronii Atradini were similar to the Munatii Planci: prominent in the area around Caieta-Formiae and perhaps long-time clients of the Aemilii Lepidi.

After the battle of Philippi Octavian returned to Italy to supervise the

distribution of land to demobilized veterans. Antony's associates were agents where Antony's veterans were settled, Plancus among them. Some settlements were colonies, whether new or reinforced, essentially a fresh start for an older community. In other places the incoming veterans received land on an individual basis (*viritim* grants), and there was no colony. Wherever these settlements occurred there was massive dispossession of landholders who lost their property for no reason other than that the triumvirs had selected their towns and regions to be given out to the land-hungry veterans whose demands could not be denied. The wretched and now-impoverished dispossessed directed their hatred at the triumvir on the spot whom they saw as responsible: Octavian.¹⁷ Antony was in the east and escaped most of the opprobrium. Some joined fugitives from the proscriptions and fled to Sextus Pompeius in Sicily.

Whether while still consul in 42 or as proconsul in 41 is not clear, but Plancus supervised confiscation and distribution of lands around Beneventum.¹⁸ Glossing over the ugly aspects as best he could, in his epitaph he does not mention the confiscation and practically poses as a colonial founder as at Raurica and Lugdunum: *agros divisit in Italia Beneventi*. In imperial times this old (268) Latin colony bore the title *Concordia*; who selected the title is unknown, but it reflects the officially harmonious relations between natives and incoming veterans. Several veterans' tombstones from the area of Beneventum dating to this period survive. At least one of them can be regarded as a beneficiary of Plancus' actions; three others are possible candidates.

- (1) EX TESTAMENTO/C. LISIDIO M.F. STE LEG XXX/M. LISIDIO Q.F. PVB PATRI/HELVIAE C.L. RVFAE MATRI/LISIDIAE C L. PRIMAE/LISIDIAE C.L. CHRESTAE/C. LISIDIO C. L. FAVSTO H.M.H.N.S. (*CIL* 9.1616)

The tomb of the Lisidius family, built by C. Lisidius by the terms of his will; he states that the monument does not pass to heirs. Caius Lisidius was a veteran of the Thirtieth Legion, whose high number reflects the massive enlistments of the 40s: formed by Caesar in 49, passing to Antony after Mutina in 43 and demobilized after Philippi. He was of the Stellatina voting tribe, the tribe of Beneventum area; his parents were Marcus of the Publilia tribe and his freedwoman Helvia Rufa. Also buried here were his two freedwomen Lisidia Prima and Lisidia Chresta and his freedman C. Lisidius Faustus.

- (2) C MARIO C.F. STE/LEGIONE XX ŞİÇİ/FAVSTVS L./IN FRONTE P XVI/IN A. P. XVI (kk, pp. 250–52). From Ligures Baebiani, a part of the *territorium* of Beneventum at least from 41. Veterans from legion XX

(earlier read as X or XXX) were settled here either in 36–30 or 14.

The freedman Faustus set up this tomb (16 by 16 ft.) to Caius Marius of the Stellatina tribe, a veteran of Legio XX Siciliana. It is possible that Leg. XX was demobilized in 41/40 and then recalled to action for the campaign of 36 where it earned its epithet Siciliana. Marius could thus have received land from Plancus, been recalled, and returned. Keppie 1983, pp. 155f., 214 no. 28f. for vets of legions VI and XXX.

- (3) A. SILANVS/IȘȚE ȘIȚIL/SIGNIFER SIBI/ID SILANO ET/FRATRI SVO IN/FR XII IN AGRO XX/PP (CIL 9.1625) Aulus Silanus a *signifer* (standard-bearer) in legion (XX?) Siciliana (erected this tomb, 12 by 20 ft.) for himself and his brother Decimus. Same commentary as for the preceding.

In 41–40 came the Perusine War, puzzling to ancient and modern historians alike.¹⁹ Many of those who had their family properties confiscated took up arms against the triumvirs. Since Antony was in the east and Lepidus in Africa, Octavian had responsibility for carrying out the unpopular policies, which could not be avoided. The job conferred mixed blessings, for while he earned gratitude from the recipients he incurred unpopularity with those who lost land. Plancus and the other Antonian officers in the area – Pollio, Ventidius, and Fufius Calenus (who moved south from Gaul) – likely realized he was undermining Antony by taking the credit for getting his veterans their promised land, but they logically declined to wage war against a triumvir without specific instructions from their superior. Antony's wife Fulvia and brother Lucius took up the cause of the dispossessed against the clear interests of Antony by crying that Octavian was stealing all the credit and thus winning away the loyalty of Antony's own veterans and further confusing the situation by claiming to represent the *res publica* against triumviral arbitrary rule.

Antony doubtless enjoyed the thought of Octavian incurring hatred from the civilians, but he could not permit either his soldiers to be deprived of the lands they had been promised or his own kin to undermine him. Fulvia is said to have raised troops and turned them over to Plancus, who likely recruited on his own around Beneventum and then began joint operations with the other Antonian officers against Octavian's forces under Agrippa. The worst of the fighting, the siege at Perusia (Perugia), occurred over the winter of 41/40, and this gave Antony the excuse that the absence of communications had left him in the dark and unable to provide timely orders to his subordinates in Italy. Rather than totally ignorant, he was probably poorly informed, receiving information that was out of date by the time he got it, and used winter weather as an excuse to do nothing. He calculated that the ruthless Octavian would crush the opposition and see to it that the veterans got the land they

had been promised. If the Italians hated him because of it, well, that was the way of politics and war. If Lucius and Fulvia became casualties, they deserved their fate for acting on their own even when they said they were acting for him. Lacking orders, Plancus and the others did not know how far to press the issue: they hesitated to attack Antony's wife and brother or wage war against his triumviral colleague.

Plancus, Pollio, and Ventidius waited and waited, received no orders from their superior, but finally hesitantly marched. Plancus moved cautiously northward with three legions and mauled a smaller force of Octavian. The Antonians got within signaling distance of one another, but as they were still without clear orders pulled back a safe distance from the city which fell in the late winter.²⁰ Lucius and Fulvia were granted safe passage out. Plancus retreated southward, but two of his legions deserted to Agrippa and his cavalry went over to Sextus Pompeius on Sicily. It is revealing that the victorious Octavian and Agrippa let Antony's man Plancus depart Italy once he had lost his army. They chose not to crush this Antonian and allowed him to escort Fulvia and her children to Greece in the spring.²¹ He did not return to Italy until 32 with the exception of a brief visit to Brundisium in Antony's entourage in 39.

From Greece he probably went on to Phoenicia and there met Antony. Antony is said to have encountered friends there and learned from them the full extent of the troubles Fulvia and Lucius had caused. Plutarch says this was Antony's first knowledge of the Italian war, but more likely it was his initial detailed report. Antony went on to Athens and there had a reunion of sorts with his wife.²² Much of the blame for the Perusine War soon fell on Fulvia and Lucius: easy targets, as he died in Spain and she succumbed to illness at Sicyon in 40 and had never conformed to Roman expectations of a woman's place with her open participation in political and military affairs. Plancus' role in this conflict was a subsidiary one, though he (and the other Antonians) could have influenced the course of events had they committed their troops against Agrippa and Octavian even without Antony's explicit instructions. From his perspective, however, the war was one more reason for mutual enmity between him and Caesar – one more reason why eight years later he would have to be very sure of a friendly reception when he decided to abandon Antony.

The eastern provinces paid a high price for Antony's dalliance and neglect of duties. In addition to the triumvirs and their close associates, two adherents of the old system deserve greater attention than they have generally received: Sextus Pompeius and Quintus Labienus. They were determined to encroach on the triumvirs' control and apparently to establish their own regional areas of control. In their desire to have shares of supreme power, including lands, they

are unlike Plancus, who never exhibited any intentions of complete independence. Their ambitions affected Plancus' career as well. Recent scholarship has provided a welcome corrective to the negative and even cursory coverage in the sources.²³ Little need be said about Sextus' activities, as he did not much affect Plancus until the final stage of his career. Labienus deserves fuller attention.

Pompey, son of the Great One, gathered a fleet with which he gained control of Sicily and the western Mediterranean; a blockade and frequent raids along the Italian coastline cut off shipments of grain to the capital, adding to the miseries caused by the Perusine War. He also sheltered many refugees from the triumvirs' oppressive confiscations and the proscriptions. He was a rival to Octavian, whose propagandistic belittling of him as a pirate is inaccurate. See later for the last act in his drama.

Roman relations with Parthia had been poor since Carrhae in 53. Both parties ignored the supposed border at the Euphrates. Quintus Labienus, son of the former Caesarian legate Titus who had gone over to the Pompeians and fallen in battle on their behalf, joined Cassius. In 43 he was sent to the court of King Orodes II to seek aid. After Cassius' death at Philippi, Labienus teamed up with Prince Pacorus and co-led an invasion of Rome's eastern lands. Syria and the neighboring lands (as Judaea) fell to Pacorus, and Labienus moved through Cilicia, crossed the Taurus, and rapidly swept westward toward the Aegean coast.

Antony appointed Plancus governor of Asia soon after the latter arrived from Italy, at the earliest in late 40; otherwise, his term began in 39. The appointment is proof that Antony approved of his conduct during the Perusine War and recognition of his administrative ability. About the same time, he appointed P. Ventidius Bassus to a special proconsular *imperium* and gave him command of the war against the invasion of Syria by Pacorus and Labienus. Antony must not have foreseen any military danger to *provincia Asia*, as nothing was done to step up military preparedness. Another indication that Antony regarded Lucius and Fulvia as primarily responsible for the troubles in Italy is that he ensured a consulship for Asinius Pollio in 40 who had fought them in the recent war. Antony was better at protecting his interests in Rome than in providing decisive political and military leadership in the East.

Plancus was evidently caught by surprise at the speed of Labienus' advance. Asia had never had a standing garrison, so he was essentially unarmed and had little time to organize a defense. Antony failed to dispatch troops or come in person to Plancus' aid, and Roman rule in southern Asia Minor nearly collapsed. Rome had never been popular in Asia Minor, and hatred ran high in 40–39 after the oppressive taxes imposed by Dolabella (44–43), Brutus and Cassius (43–42), and Antony (41–40), who ordered payment of nine years'

taxes in two. Many of the natives saw the invaders as liberators and saviors. Because the crisis proved to be short-lived and ended with Labienus' death in early 39, and because it was confined to Antony's east not Octavian's west, it has been consistently undervalued and Labienus dismissed as a brigand, renegade, and traitor. For a few months in 40–39 he was as much a threat to Roman control of Anatolia and Syria as Sextus was to Octavian in the West.

Since no ancient source provides a full account of events, it is difficult to determine the details. This was not a raid for plunder and slaves but a full invasion aiming at conquest; Labienus evidently sought to take advantage of the collapse of the *res publica* to carve out a position of power for himself, just as Sextus was doing from his bases on Sicily and, from his perspective, as the triumvirs could be regarded doing with their distribution of provinces among themselves. Although he allied with the Parthians, it is probably incorrect to designate him a traitor or turncoat. Pacorus stayed in Syria-Judaea, so in attacking through Anatolia Labienus appears to have been acting on his own to get what he wanted. The Parthians never showed any interest in going west of Syria.²⁴

Caria, the southwestern corner of Anatolia, was Labienus' principal target. Several of its major cities are known to have opposed him and paid dearly for it. Mylasa and Laodicea, after having accepted garrisons from the invaders, rebelled under the leadership of rhetors-turned-pro-Roman statesmen Hybreas and Zeno, were retaken and sacked. Plancus was at Mylasa and may have prepared to undergo a siege. Whatever actions he may have taken quickly failed, and he withdrew to the offshore islands and waited out the storm. Labienus took harsh revenge for what he regarded as the treachery by the cities.²⁵ Nearby Stratonicea resisted as best it could and was nearly destroyed, while Aphrodisias stood firm behind its walls and, not in Labienus' direct path, escaped. All three sent envoys to Octavian in Rome and secured valuable privileges as rewards.²⁶ The Aphrodisians' ambassadors, first Solon and then Zoilos, shrewdly played up the town's name City of Aphrodite (Venus) to stress its ties to Julius Caesar who claimed descent from Venus' grandson by Aeneas, Iulus. Octavian, impressed, saw to it that the Senate awarded the city immunity from taxes, military occupation, and requisitions and extended asylum privileges for the great temple of Aphrodite. He also wrote in person to Antony's freedman agent Stephanus at Laodicea to help Aphrodisias.

Ventidius Bassus arrived with a regular Roman army for the campaigning season of 39 and took command of operations against the invaders. His title is a matter of uncertainty: he cannot have been proconsul of Asia, as Plancus was already that; nor can he have been Antony's *legatus*: a legate could not celebrate a triumph as his *imperium* was derivative and he did not hold the auspices. Thus his *imperium* must not have been defined territorially.²⁷ His

swift successes in the field against Labienus freed Plancus to accompany Antony to Italy for the meeting with Octavian at Brundisium in September 39 to settle their differences and confirm their partnership. An incident during the voyage illustrates Antony's openness and Plancus' caution. Antony's ships encountered those of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, whose father had been one of the anti-Caesarian oligarchs. Ahenobarbus signaled his intention of joining Antony by having his crews salute him. Some of Antony's officers were skeptical, suspecting treason, Plancus among them: after all, this Republican admiral might use this chance to assassinate his long-time foe and thus avenge the Republic and his family at one blow. Ahenobarbus was motivated by hatred of Octavian, not liking for Antony, but he received a warm welcome and stayed loyal until 31.²⁸ Ventidius expelled Labienus from Asia, killed him in Cilicia, and moved on to besiege the faithless Antiochus king of Commagene at Samosata on the Euphrates. The siege was still underway when Antony relieved him in 38 and sent him to Rome to celebrate a triumph in November.

In the meantime, Plancus resumed his position as proconsul, though nothing is recorded, so perhaps we should assume an overriding directory of recovery in the cities which Labienus had damaged. A fragmentary inscription at Mylasa mentions (without context) a "priest of Lucius Munatius [Plancus]."²⁹ What lies behind this honor is unknown, but a good hypothesis is that he conferred an (unspecified) benefaction on the city. Mylasa is known to have been free and immune from taxation, a *civitas libera et immunitis*, as well as the center of a judicial district, or *conventus*. Perhaps Plancus confirmed at least the freedom and immunity. (It lost its position as a *conventus* center, presumably in an Augustan reorganization.) If this religious honor is the consequence of a benefaction by the proconsul, it is logical to assume similar confirmation of privileges to the other cities which had suffered from or been threatened by Labienus: certainly Laodicea, Stratonicea, Alabanda, and Aphrodisias, perhaps also Ephesus and Miletus. No evidence indicates high honors from other cities.

Beyond directing the initial stages of recovery, Plancus may have gathered supplies and recruits for Ventidius, who only had military command against Labienus, not charge of civil administration.³⁰ This may be the year when he won a military victory of sufficient size to claim the title *imperator* for the second time. His epitaph and another inscription and coins of 40/39 all speak of him as IMP(erator) ITER(um).³¹ Nothing is known of any campaign, and he did not celebrate a triumph; perhaps one can hazard mop-up operations against Labienus' stragglers or provincials who took advantage of the chaos for their own purposes. He was proconsul of Asia into 38 and was succeeded by M. Cocceius Nerva.

Nothing is known of Plancus in 37 or 36. While he can be assumed to have been serving somewhere in the east as one of Antony's deputies, one can only speculate as to his title and duties. He was not the governor of Syria, as C. Sosius (cos. 32) held that post 38–35. Since Antony's own powers as *triumvir rei publicae constituendae* were very broad and undefined, he could assign Plancus almost any military, administrative, or diplomatic tasks. He may have been with Antony for the Parthian campaign of 36, as Syme suggested, but I find it more likely he was stationed in Antioch or some other rear headquarters, as the relatively full narratives of the campaign do not mention him. A designation such as "chief of staff" catches the unspecific overtones and importance and will be employed here.³²

Plancus' rise stands in marked contrast to the demise of his one-time patron with whom he had probably severed ties back in 43. Plancus succeeded by being a capable follower, a reliable and competent "Number Two" man. He had never grasped for the supreme power of Caesar or the triumvirs. By 35, Antony excepted, Plancus was the most successful of Caesar's Gallic War legates, though few still survived as death had trimmed the number: Hirtius, Pansa, Labienus, Q. Cicero, Trebatius Testa, Trebonius, and Dec. Brutus. Sallust and Pollio dropped out of politics and wrote history.³³ At an earlier date, Gabinius had risen by following Pompey, and Agrippa was doing much the same under Octavian.³⁴ Plancus' ambition was limited to a place in the second rank: the first rank was now down to Antony and Octavian, and the second rank was a select few.

The balance of power in the Roman world altered swiftly in 36–35. Octavian and Agrippa marshaled vast forces to eliminate Sextus Pompey, who had disrupted the west since 43 with his navy and control of Sicily and other islands. A two-pronged campaign developed, as Lepidus crossed from Africa to Sicily with a substantial army while Octavian and Agrippa pushed southward through the toe of Italy. Agrippa destroyed Sextus' fleet at Naulochus, but Sextus' army surrendered to Lepidus outside Messana. Resenting his subordination, Lepidus attempted to use his enlarged army to compel Octavian to treat him as a full equal. His troops, however, deserted to Octavian. Octavian stripped his former colleague of his triumviral powers but left him as Pontifex Maximus (because he scrupled to kill the holder of the state's chief religious position which carried no political clout anyway) and confined him to house arrest at Circeii where he had family property. Lepidus lived on in comfortable obscurity until his death in 12.³⁵

In 35 Plancus governed Syria. He had Antony's seal or signet ring, which empowered him to act in Antony's name while his superior was away on the second Parthian campaign.³⁶ No other of Antony's associates is attested to have had such power or stood so high in his favor. Far more than in 44–43,

Plancus was now *particeps consiliorum*. A few years later in the west, Octavian entrusted his signet to Agrippa and Maecenas, so Antony evidently held Plancus to be their equal, capable of performing the military duties of the former and the diplomacy of the latter.³⁷ He probably valued Plancus chiefly for his “smoothness” as orator, stylist, and diplomat, and we can add his abilities as an administrator. At some point Plancus and his nephew M. Titius witnessed Antony’s will, another indication of his high standing.³⁸ Obviously he was still in agreement with Antony’s various policies in the east and his dealings with Octavian. Plancus’ widespread duties during these years allowed him to accumulate an enormous quantity of information about all aspects of Antony’s complex policies through the east. Nothing indicates, however, that Plancus ever aspired to replace Antony; he was satisfied to remain his superior’s second in command.

After Naulochus, Sextus fled to the east and continued his efforts to remain a participant in the power struggles. Octavian did not pursue, in part because he had more pressing items on his agenda in the west (reduction of his vast army, deposition of Lepidus), but also because he wanted to see what Antony would do. Sextus’ continued military efforts in the northern Aegean and then in Bithynia and on into central Anatolia coincided with Antony’s invasion of the Parthian Empire. Antony was rightfully suspicious of Sextus and relied on trusted associates to monitor him: Domitius in Bithynia, Furnius in Asia, Titius as admiral, and Plancus in Syria. All were probably proconsuls (not *legati*), but since Plancus was empowered to make decisions during Antony’s prolonged absence from the lands assigned to him as triumvir (as indicated by his possession of Antony’s signet), he evidently outranked the others. Only he had actually reached the consulship, as the others were consuls-designate.³⁹

All four of these subordinates were involved in the elimination of Sextus Pompeius in 35. For our purposes the episode is chiefly significant in illustrating Plancus’ standing under Antony and raises yet another question about his character. As during the Perusine War, Antony did not provide clear instructions to his officers as to how they should treat Sextus, who made matters worse by his duplicity and continuous machinations. Striking before his opponents could unite, Sextus defeated Domitius in battle and Furnius⁴⁰ alone was too weak. Antony dispatched Titius with men and ships from Syria. Plancus may have advised Antony of the reliability of Furnius, his legate in Gaul in 43, and Titius his sister’s son. Titius did not hesitate to turn against his former savior: Sextus had sheltered Titius’ father Lucius during the proscriptions, and his officer Menas had captured Titius but spared his life. Father and son returned to Italy in the general amnesty after the Treaty of Brundisium in 39.⁴¹

Titius caught Sextus and executed him at Miletus. It is unclear whether he

acted on his own responsibility, had orders from Plancus, or had instructions from Antony (relayed through Plancus?). Antony as triumvir and overall commander bore the ultimate but not the immediate responsibility for the decision. The easiest assumption is that, via his signet ring, he authorized Plancus to decide Sextus' fate as events played out: deal with him if he showed good faith, execute him if he did not. Sextus' negotiations with the Parthians and anti-Roman rulers in northern Anatolia made him a traitor, and his years of armed opposition to the triumvirs demonstrated he could not be left alive as he would never quit.⁴² The political geography now became much simpler than previously: first Labienus was killed, second Lepidus was removed from power, and third Sextus was disposed of: only now did it become a matter of which of two warlords would become master of Rome.

Little of substance is known of Plancus' actions until he abandoned Antony in 32; any statement is speculative. To what extent he assisted Antony in formulating policy cannot be determined, but he was certainly well positioned to witness the consequences of Antony's decisions as the triumvir thoroughly revised the network of provinces and client rulers established by Pompey in 63 and devised "a network of relationships with numerous regional and local dynasts that was entirely centered on his person."⁴³ The most important client rulers south of Anatolia were Cleopatra in Egypt, Cyprus and parts of Cilicia, and Herod of Judaea; in Asia Minor we find Adiatorix in Heraclea Pontica, Polemon son of the heroic Zenon of Laodicea in Pontus and then Lower Armenia (ably assisted by his wife Pythodoris of Tralles), Amyntas in an expanded Galatia-Pamphylia, and Archelaus of Cappadocia. On the whole, Antony and his advisors chose well.⁴⁴ The proof is that Octavian confirmed these rulers and a host of lesser ones, though he did not give Antony the least bit of credit. Further, Antony could not possibly have had the background information prerequisite to making this multitude of decisions by himself but necessarily relied on advice from men who were more fully informed, natives such as Nicolaus of Damascus and his own subordinates, among whom we can place his chief of staff, Plancus.

When not passing over his role in silence in order to concentrate on Antony, our sources are hostile. This bias has obscured a simple point: that in these few years Plancus was at the peak of his career and possessed more influence than at any other time to date. He must have rendered advice to Antony frequently, though we have no record of conferences and communications. This is, admittedly, an *argumentum e silentio*, but it is a necessary inference. Antony never concerned himself deeply and consistently in matters of policy, but he was smart enough to rely on others. Octavian never admitted his debt to Antony's policies in the east, so he certainly would not credit Antony's subordinates. Invariably he monopolized all credit for himself: the *Res Gestae*,

for instance, never expresses gratitude to anyone, not even the indispensable Agrippa; the lengthy inscription is filled with belittling of all enemies and declarations in the first person, and other than in consular dates there are no names other than the ruler.

Plancus' governorship of Syria is of uncertain duration, but it presumably lasted at least until Antony's return from the second Parthian campaign. Velleius accuses him of extortion in this period, and the wealth of the east may have been tempting. Offers of bribes by worried potentates must have been frequent. He probably kept an eye on the troubles of Herod, Antony's candidate for the Judaeian throne and still fighting his way to domination of his kingdom even after Sosius' help in 37. Herod and Cleopatra were on bad terms, and their animosity required Roman supervision. Plancus may well have been present at Laodicea near Antioch in 35 when Antony summoned Herod for interrogation regarding the murder of his brother-in-law, Aristobulus the High Priest.

At the court of Antony and Cleopatra, late 35–32

Ancient writers focused so narrowly on the high drama of the court life of Antony and Cleopatra at Alexandria after his return from the second Parthian campaign – their love affair, their immorality and allegedly scandalous parties, Cleopatra's influence over the besotted Antony who abandoned his Roman heritage for the luxurious corruption of the east personified by the queen – that they made no effort to assess the roles of others and failed to see the fundamental soundness of many of the policies that emanated from the court.⁴⁵ Much of this distorted view is, of course, due to the flood of Octavian's propaganda which drowned out so much reality.

After leaving Syria, Plancus was evidently at the court of Antony and Cleopatra until mid-32. No specific position is on record, so we will continue to label him chief of staff. In later life he was not anxious to highlight these years: not a hint of them in his epitaph at Caieta, which omits all service with Antony, and the governorships of Asia and Syria were prestigious positions; IMP ITER is vague as to military operations. He was one of a handful of Romans who came to realize that Antony was seriously undermining his own position by allowing Cleopatra to exercise excessive influence which Octavian spiced up and circulated widely for maximum effect. Antony's revels and failure to maintain a base of support among the senators at Rome were major mistakes.⁴⁶

Two incidents have long been taken as illustrating Plancus' servile flattery and un-Roman conduct in the flagrant immorality of court life. In fact, their

significance is quite different. In one, Plancus was the arbiter when Cleopatra bet Antony she could consume ten million sesterces at a single banquet. When she proved her point by dissolving an immensely valuable pearl earring in vinegar, Plancus kept Antony from trying to top her and her from disposing of the second of the pair.⁴⁷ Told as a revelation of the extravagance at Cleopatra's court, the story reveals Plancus' standing: he must have been at or near the high table, probably reclining next to the queen, to be able to put his hand over her wrist and block the dissolution of the second earring.

The second tale is probably the best-known indictment of Plancus' career, and Velleius (but nobody else) tells the tale in a fashion worthy of a modern tabloid: salacious disgust that a high-ranking Roman debased himself with disgusting conduct and abject flattery of the queen. On some unspecified occasion this Roman consular portrayed the merman Glaucus, naked except for a fishtail, painted blue, seaweed on his head, slithering across the floor to the amusement of all present.⁴⁸ The lost original account probably provided the setting: at a dinner party, Antony, Cleopatra and their guests were costumed and acted the roles of ...; Plancus was particularly effective as Glaucus, complete with blue body paint, seaweed, and scaly tail.⁴⁹

Other accounts of the activities at the court focus on Antony and Cleopatra. Suetonius has preserved tidbits from the archives to which he had access as *ab epistulis* in the time of Hadrian. Neither he nor Plutarch mentions the Glaucus episode, but the latter must have been aware of it because he is fairly detailed about court life; he evidently regarded it as unimportant and does not mention Plancus until his fateful decision of 32. Velleius went out of his way to dig up salacious gossip, as his particular purpose was to convince his readers that Plancus was a leader in the vice that permeated the entire court and for which Antony was famous.⁵⁰

In reality, there was no scandal. Plutarch reports that the Orientals liked Antony because he did not mind being laughed at, a rare quality among Romans famous for *gravitas* which tended to become stuffiness. His enemies pounced on this deficiency in Antony's character as a grievous flaw. We can grant that Antony was less worried about propriety than was thought essential for a Roman *nobilis*, but this does not mean that even the highest-ranking Romans did not have a sense of fun. Plancus, too, had a light side. We must distinguish between serious policy and leisure amusements. Antony as New Dionysus, equated with Osiris in Egypt, and Cleopatra as New Isis, were not the decadents they were made out to be in the west; at least some of the time they were striving to win public support in Egypt and the east.⁵¹

In contrast are the dinner parties. Plutarch alludes to Antony's love of jokes and pranks in 41–40 but skips over similar incidents in 34–32 to avoid repetition and to move forward to the Actium campaign and Antony's final

tragedy.⁵² Had he written up the later escapades, he might have related Plancus as Glaucus. Romans of a traditional mold did not approve of such conduct by statesmen in public, where provincial subjects could see them.⁵³ This old-fashioned reserve was breaking down.⁵⁴ More to the point, Octavian was equally guilty of mockery of the gods at an after-hours dinner party, as Antony took the high road to condemn him for a *cena ... secretior* in which the diners “*deorum dearumque habitu discubuisse ... et ipsum pro Apolline ornatum*” (a private dinner party at which the guests reclined to eat while costumed as the gods and goddesses and Octavian as Apollo).⁵⁵ No mermen apparently, but the minor deity Plancus/ Glaucus is tame compared with Antony’s salty version of Octavian’s “feast of the twelve gods” at which Octavian misbehaved with Livia’s (soon to be ex-) husband Ti. Nero/Jupiter present. There is little difference between this banquet and Antony’s.

Antony did not care that his actions could be used against him in propaganda. And he compounded his error by failing to parade rectitude. Octavian’s “Italian” policies accompanied by praises of the simple rustic lifestyle in Vergil’s *Georgics* were powerful counters to Antony’s oriental decadence. By themselves, Antony’s frolics were harmless, as Octavian knew full well from participation in his own.

By the end of 33 Plancus had been associated with Antony for a decade. No one was in a better position to assess his strengths and weaknesses. He had outlived two early adherents: L. Decidius Saxa, killed in 40, and P. Ventidius, who received a state funeral not long after his triumph in November 38.⁵⁶ C. Sosius had governed Syria for Antony in 38–35 but stayed in Rome after his triumph in September 34 and so was not in competition for Antony’s favor. Early in his consulship of 32, with his colleague Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus he fled back to Antony, a serious miscalculation.⁵⁷ P. Canidius Crassus was suffect consul in 40 and remained with Antony through the war at Actium. His loyalty cost him his life, as Octavian had him executed.⁵⁸ L. Pinarius Scarpus may have reckoned that Octavian would regard him as a potential rival in the power struggles, as he was son of Caesar’s sister, whereas Octavian was a grandson of Caesar’s other sister: a nephew is closer kin than a great-nephew. He held Cyrenaica with four legions for Antony, but by refusing to turn his army over to Antony after Actium, he in effect declared for Octavian. Better late than never, as Octavian left him as governor of this area west of Egypt.⁵⁹ Two other prominent Antonians were more closely tied to Plancus than to Antony himself: his nephew M. Titius and his former legate C. Furnius. Titius followed his uncle in abandoning Antony in 32, whereas Furnius stayed loyal but won a pardon through the entreaties of his son.

Antonians who reached the consulship were in a sense at a disadvantage, as the office required them to stay in Rome. As they only slowly, if at all,

returned to Antony, they lost the opportunity for continuous observation of his strengths and weaknesses. Some are known to have changed their alliance. In this group we can place the consuls of 36, L. Gellius Poplicola, who commanded under Antony at Actium and thereafter disappears from the records, and M. Cocceius Nerva, who at some unstated point shifted to Octavian; the consuls of 34, Paullus Aemilius Lepidus, his office perhaps a reward from Octavian and sign that he would not share the dishonor of his fallen triumviral uncle, and L. Sempronius Atratinus, who as his colleague's brother-in-law may have switched sides at the same time; a suffect of 33, C. Fonteius Capito, said to be a close friend of Antony; both consuls of 32, Ahenobarbus and Sosius. M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, may have changed to Octavian by 36; and M. Licinius Crassus, grandson of the triumvir, became consul in 30 without having held the praetorship.⁶⁰

By the end of 33 and the expiration of the triumvirate, Plancus had evidently become dissatisfied with Antony's reactions to the steady accumulation of power by Octavian and the growing influence of Cleopatra. Even discounting the exaggerations of propaganda, and Plancus knew the full story, he had become convinced that war was predictable and Antony's defeat probable. The Antonians had all along underestimated Octavian, who now had the initiative. He had conducted a victorious campaign in Illyria and had never sent Antony the promised military supplies.⁶¹ Plancus had been a victim of Octavian's failure to fulfill promises in 43 and may have warned Antony in the mid-30s not to rely on him. One imagines Plancus nodding glumly and muttering, "It figures: Octavian is no more trustworthy now than a few years ago." Antony did little or nothing to block or counter Octavian's aggression. He had suffered a huge defeat in Parthia in 36 and barely avenged it in 35. In 43 Antony had been the dominant triumvir with Lepidus in second place and the twenty-year old Caesar third. By 33 Lepidus was gone and Octavian was overtaking the lackadaisical Antony.

Worse, when Antony did act, his inclinations took him in precisely the wrong direction. Shortly, Horace was to see a parallel to the legendary warrior-hero Ajax whose tragic end, like Antony's, was to fall on his sword in a pitiful effort to salvage a modicum of honor. Antony's relationship with Cleopatra was a disaster, in spite of the exaggerations and outright lies of Octavian's propaganda. Octavian's sister Octavia had been Antony's wife since 40 and had borne him two daughters, but he repudiated her when she attempted to personally bring him needed supplies: he accepted the latter but sent her back to Rome. Octavian countered by getting a grant of sacrosanctity like that of the tribunes for his sister and wife Livia, so that virulent attacks on them (like those on Fulvia earlier) could be construed as treason and grounds for war. It was clear Antony was permanently attached to Cleopatra over his

lawful Roman wife. In 48–44 Caesar had a public affair and even a bastard son with Cleopatra but nobody much cared, because he never replaced his wife Calpurnia and never allowed the queen to influence policy.⁶² His dalliance was little different from those conducted by many other Romans.

It was, of course, in Cleopatra's interest that Antony should stay with her in the east where she and her councillors could influence him: the fewer ties he had with Rome, the better. She needed a powerful Roman to rule Egypt, and Antony was the man. She tapped the wealth of Egypt to make herself indispensable, and the supplies and money became increasingly necessary as Antony was unable to draw on the west. Octavian's men distorted Cleopatra's decadence, and Plutarch over-romanticized the extent of Antony's infatuation and the role of those who flattered "Dionysus and Isis" to ingratiate themselves with them. Antony and the dwindling number of his supporters found themselves compelled to choose between capitulation to Octavian and continued residence in the east.

Two specific errors were devastating. One was the so-called Donations of Alexandria in 34. Antony conferred lands and impressive titles on Cleopatra and her children, the oldest of whom was probably her son by Caesar, called Caesarion, born in 47, whereas the three youngest were by Antony, twins called Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene born in 40/39 and a toddler Ptolemy Philadelphus.⁶³ He also conducted a Roman-style triumph in the queen's capital, a flagrant violation of Roman propriety. The significance of the ceremonies is multiple: the arbitrariness and possible illegality of Antony's gifts of lands (not particularly valuable but whether triumviral powers included this right was disputed), the minor loss of revenues to Rome, and most of all Antony's failure to appreciate how Octavian would turn everything against him. The triumvirate (really only a duumvirate since the demotion of Lepidus in 36) formally expired at the end of 33, but this was a legal technicality, as Octavian and Antony continued to exercise full powers.

Antony and Cleopatra moved from Alexandria to Ephesus and then in the spring of 32 on to Athens. There Antony made his second fatal error, his decision to divorce Octavia and "marry" Cleopatra (if he had not done so a year or two earlier).⁶⁴ The marriage was invalid in Roman law since she did not possess *conubium*, the right of a foreigner to contract a binding marriage with a *civis Romanus*. A marriage under Egyptian law was beside the point in Roman power politics. Technicalities aside, the wedding was an act of incredible folly, and Octavian swiftly utilized it for his own case: further proof that Antony had abandoned his virtuous long-suffering wife Octavia; Rome, Italy; and the culture of the west for the bewitching queen; Alexandria, Egypt; and the ways of the east. After all, Antony could have kept Octavia as his wife, ignoring her and leaving her in Rome, and continued his arrangement with

Cleopatra. However much the queen may have wanted the marriage, it was yet another and perhaps the culminating example of Antony's misjudgment. The divorce, reinforced by Antony's refusal to push Cleopatra aside, precipitated Plancus' decision to break with Antony. It was now a matter of seizing the right moment to move.

Notes

- 1 Syme 1987a, 7–26. I add Ahenobarbus to his assemblage.
- 2 Schiff 2010, 251. Aemilii and Valerii as patricians were more distinguished, but Ahenobarbus stuck with Antony longer. Since his father had been a strong enemy of Caesar, he and Plancus were wary of one another but set aside their differences out of loyalty to Antony until 32. There is no reason to call Plancus “invertebrate.”
- 3 Syme 1986, 106, 155–59 with table VIII; 1939, 418–30. Pharsalus: Caes., *BC* 3.99; App. 2.82. Syme conjectures that Domitius' first wife, married ca. 52–0, was an Aemilia Lepida, daughter of L. Paullus (cos. 50). Betrothal: Dio 48.54.4; marriage was ca. 26. Chap. 8 for the incident in 22.
- 4 Glauning 1936, 16–17: with Octavian by 36 since he fought with him in that year, App. 5.102–12; Gaisser 1971, 221–20; Syme 1986, 205–08. Palatine house: Dio 53.27.5. Also Plut., *Brut.* 53.3; Suet., *Aug.* 58.1.
- 5 Syme 1986, 329–45 and tables XVII and XXV. Tac., *Ann.* 6.10 for death.
- 6 *MRR* 2.341, 348; Vell. 2.67.3–4 (with Williams 1968, 83–5); not in App. 4.31. Plancus' campaign is discussed in the previous chapter.
- 7 App. 4.5–51 (16: incidents are drawn from “many books by many Roman writers”); Dio 47.1–19. Philippi: App. 4.57–138; Dio 47.20–49. Antony in Asia: App. 5.4–11; Dio 48.24–6.
- 8 See Millar 1973, 50–67; App. 4.2; Dio 46.55.3–4.
- 9 App. 4.3, 32–5; Dio 47.16 and 20.1; Plut., *Ant.* 21.4. Huzar 1978, 171; Brunt 1971, 326–27; Gabba 1971.
- 10 App.5.3 for Sextus. Quote: Welch 2012, 203–04.
- 11 Caesar's honors: App. 2.106 (in 45), Dio 47.16–18; Weinstock 1971, 389–90. The law is mentioned in the inscription of Rhosos, line 10: V. Ehrenberg and A.H.M. Jones, *Docs. Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius* (Oxford, 2nd ed. 1955) no. 301.
- 12 See Millar 1973 with notes 46–7; reprinted in *Rome, The Greek World and the East* vol. 1.
- 13 For the “Laudatio Turiae” see *ILS* 8393; Wistrand 1976; Horsfall 1983, 85–99; Osgood 2006, 67–74, suggesting that Lepidus had a “growing dislike of his younger colleague.” For Lepidus: Gowing 1992, 283–96; as Weigel points out, 1992, 74–5, Lepidus was right to be angry at Octavian's arbitrary and uncollegial attitude. None of these analyses mention Plancus.
- 14 App. 4.35, 37, 45. Jullien 1892, 132–35. Note also App. 4.40, where a Coponius was saved by his wife's appeal to Antony. Had she been turned down by Lepidus and Plancus? Presumably the same Coponius later criticized Plancus' desertion of Antony in 32 (Vell. 2.83.2).
- 15 Weigel 1992, 70, 80–2.
- 16 L. Paullus: App. 4.37. Paullus Lepidus: Morris 1965; Weigel 1985, at 183–84. The hypothesis of a marriage tie between the daughter of Paullus Lepidus and a son of Plancus is mine.

- See also Syme 1986, 109–10; and 1987b: his presence with Octavian by 36 (Suet., *Aug.* 16.3) need not mean he was already supporting Octavian at this date. Atratinus: Syme 1986, 29, 109, 329 with note 1; *IG* II (2)5179 = *SEG* 28.130 for Sempronia Atratina married to a Paullus before he was suff. in 34. Tomb (“Torre Atratina”): Coarelli 1982, 354–56.
- 17 See Osgood 2006, 108–201 for an excellent overview of the misery and gradual recovery utilizing literary and epigraphic evidence; 110 for a veteran settled by Plancus.
 - 18 App. 4.3; 5.16; Dio 48.6.1. See Keppie 1983, 58–60 and 155–61; and 2002. No. 19, 247–62. He does not mention Plancus. Jullien 1892, 137–40 is anticipatory in claiming that Plancus at the time was “by his rank and dignity the most eminent man in Antony’s party.” *Concordia: CIL* 9.2165; *AE* 1969/70 no.167.
 - 19 Appian has a lengthy account, 5.12–52; 33 for Plancus. Cf. Vell. 2.73.3–4 with Woodman 1983, 181–82. Analyses: Gabba 1971; Pelling 1988; Osgood 2006, 152–82 highlights the misery of the civilians of Italy; Bauman 1992, 83–90 for a sympathetic treatment of Fulvia; cf. Babcock, 1965.
 - 20 App. 5.19–20, 20–30, 39, 43; Dio 48.13 and 52; Plut., *Ant.* 30.2. Weigel 1992, 80–1; the promise of Africa kept Lepidus friendly toward Octavian. Roddaz 1988. In *B.Alex.* 65 Caesar is said to have spent the winter of 48–7 in Alexandria without knowledge of events in Rome, a close parallel to Antony in 41–0. Gabba 1971, 140 (citing Dio 48.27) says Antony knew all along; Huzar 1978 and Pelling 1988 agree.
 - 21 App. 5.32–5, 50, 61; cf. Vell. 2.76.2, “*muliebris fuga*” refers to Fulvia but is likely meant as a sneer against a womanly Plancus.
 - 22 Plut., *Ant.* 30.2–3; App. 5.50, 52, 59; Dio 48.28. Pelling 1988, 200 remarks: “Their conversation was no doubt heated.” Baumann 1992, 88 generously says she was “heartbroken at Antony’s infidelity and reproaches,” which is doubtful.
 - 23 Noé 1997 and Welch 2012. Noé places Labienus’ invasion in the larger context of Romano-Parthian relations from Pompeius Magnus’s arrangement of 63. The ancient sources provide only bits and pieces of Labienus’ actions and aspirations. Plutarch, Appian, and Cassius Dio were more interested in detailing Antony’s entanglement with Cleopatra at Alexandria in 41–0 than analyzing Labienus; Strabo describes a few incidents in Caria but does not give an account of the war in its entirety. Welch demonstrates that Sextus was a serious threat to and rival of Octavian from 43 to 36.
 - 24 I follow Noé. Whether Labienus’ ambitions were limited to Caria is not clear; several cities in the Lycus valley resisted him, and the invaders did not push north of Ephesus.
 - 25 Dio 48.24.3 for Plancus’ close escape. Dio’s date of 40 may be early. At the earliest he did not arrive until late in the year. See *MRR* 2.382; Pelling, 1988, 198, both following Magie 1950, 428 and 1280 note 9. Jullien 1892, 148 is wrong in holding that Plancus was never governor of Asia and that Dio is referring to his brother. Dio 48.25.2 for Roman collapse in Syria.
 - 26 Brunt 1971, 497. For an overview of Labienus’ incursion and the gradual recovery see Noé and esp. Osgood 2006, 225–31 and 274–77. Mylasya: Strabo 14.2.23–4; Dio 48.26.
 - 27 See *MRR* 2.383 (sent as proconsul in 40), 388; cf. 393.
 - 28 App. 5.55 (Plancus thinking of Lepidus’ treachery in 43?); cf. 15, 26, 50 (Pollio had already won him over though Antony was unaware of it), and 104 (Papias deceived Lepidus and then destroyed some of his ships).
 - 29 *BCH* 12 (1888) p. 15 no. 4; improved reading in *Inschriften von Mylasya* (1987) no. 131: *HIEREUS LOUKIOU MOUNATIOY* [*Plagkou tas Theas Romas*]. Date: the coupling with the Goddess Roma is a bit after Plancus’ term, but the inscription was set up before 2 BC, as

- Lucius Caesar is mentioned as alive. Noé believes Plancus conferred a benefaction on the city, whereas I have hypothesized that he attempted an armed defense before his flight to the islands – or he could have done both. Strabo heroizes Hybreas and omits Plancus; Dio mentions Plancus.
- 30 Dio 48.32.4: none of the *epulones* were in Rome in late 40, but he must be referring to 39 or 38. Carter 1970, 124 is Velleian in tone: Plancus’ “lack of courage would not seriously impair the support he could organize for” Ventidius, labeled a *mulio* or muleteer by enemies (Gellius 15.4.3; *Fam.* 10.18,3 = SB 395; Pliny, *NH* 7.135). Wiseman 1971, 84, 88 rightly upgrades his occupation to “haulage contractor” in “the transport business.”
- 31 Epitaph and *ILLRP* 431; Crawford 1974, 100–01 nos. 520–22; 528 and 742–43. Obverse: M. ANTON. IMP. AVG (ur) III VIR R.P.C. with the augur’s *lituus*. Reverse: L. PLANCVS PRO COS (or IMP ITER) and the *capis* (jug) associated with the *epulones*. See Masi 1971, 6.247–48.; Syme 1939, 264 note 2. Jullien 1892, 158–59 dates it to 35, tying the claim to the defeat of Sextus Pompeius, in which task Plancus’ role was too remote to justify *imperator*.
- 32 Livy, *Per.* 131, *legatus*. Syme 1939, 264 for the first Parthian War. *MRR* 2.393, 397; 402 and 408–09 for Nerva and Sosius. The other eastern provinces were too unimportant to be held by a man of Plancus’ standing; their known governors were younger men. Roger of Salisbury under Henry I is a reasonable Medieval parallel to Plancus under Antony: troubleshooter, confidant, and viceroy; the formal titles of bishop and justiciar masked his real significance: Kealey 1972.
- 33 Syme 1964b, esp. 217–19. Sallust died in 35; *Bj* 3.4 for “*potentia paucorum*” (= the triumvirs?) and 3.1 for those who acquire “*honus per fraudem*.” His barbs may be aimed at Balbus (cos. 40) and Salvidienus and certainly reflect Sallust’s own bitter disappointment at not reaching the top.
- 34 Q. Salvidienus Rufus was similar until he sought to betray Octavian in 40: App. 5.66; Vell. 2.76.4; Dio 48.33.5; Suet., *Aug.* 66.2; Syme 1939, 220.
- 35 *MRR* 2.400, esp. Livy, *Per.* 129; App. 5.124–26; Dio 49.12; Vell. 2.80.4; Suet., *Aug.* 16.4; Plut., *Ant.* 55.
- 36 Cf. Cic., *ad Q. fr.* 1.1.13 = SB 1, “*sit anulus tuus non ut vas aliquod sed tamen ipse tu, non alienae voluntatis sed testis tuae*” (“may your [signet] ring be not some vessel but as you yourself, a witness of your will, not someone else’s”).
- 37 App. 5.144; Dio 51.3.5–6; Vell. 2.83.1 belittles Plancus as *librarius*, a clerk, and insinuates extortion; but his inveterate hostility and mockery fail to disprove Plancus’ high standing. Sattler 1960, 67 n. 113. Discussions: Jullien 1892, 157; Reinhold 1933, 59; Huzar 1978, 202 doubtfully claims Plancus had “hopes of assuming power after Antony.” See Syme 1939, 267; Pelling 1988, Plut., *Ant.* 58.2–4.
- 38 Plut., *Ant.* 58.3; Vell. 2.83.2; Dio 50.3. For the period 36–29 Reinhold’s commentary on Dio 49–52 has been steadily consulted.
- 39 Sosius had governed Syria 38–6. For the titles, see *MRR* 2.401–02, 407–09. Plancus’ consulship in 42 gave him substantial seniority over the others: Sosius was designate for 34, Ahenobarbus for 32, Titius for 31, and Furnius for 29. For the final stages of Sextus’ exploits, see Welch 2012.
- 40 App. 5.127, 132 for Octavian, Antony, and Sextus. Furnius had sought the office of praetor in 43 for 42; Cicero raised the possibility of his waiting until 42 when Plancus could employ consular influence: *Fam.* 10.25f. = SB 403, 424. The events of late 43 onward shut Furnius out from the consulship which he reached belatedly.
- 41 Vell. 2.83.2; 2.77.3, for return in 39. Other Pompeians returned only in 33: Dio 49.43.5. See

- Sattler 1960, 16. Reinhold 1988, 44.
- 42 App. 5.135–44; Dio 48.30.4–5; 49.17–18; 50.1.4. Velleius 2.79.6 blames Antony, so his hostility to Plancus had limits. Modern scholarship tends to blame Antony: Jullien 1892, 161–62; *MRR* 2.409; Magie 1950, 438–39; Huzar 1978, 145; Bengtson 1977, 210–12; Buchheim 1960, 88–9 argue that once again Antony was indecisive and left Plancus to order the execution. Leaving the question of blame undecided: Carter 1970, 162–64; Grant 1972, 155; Reinhold 1988, 45.
- 43 See Marek 2016, 301–08; quote on 301. Marek does not mention Plancus in his survey of 41–32.
- 44 Marek confirms the older studies, e.g., Huzar 1978, 153; Bengtson 1977; Sherwin-White 1984. Amyntas assisted in the defeat of Sextus Pompeius.
- 45 See for example, Goldsworthy 2010. His focus on Antony and Cleopatra almost entirely excludes recognition of the importance of his subordinates. The few references to Plancus are in passing, and the same applies to his references to Lepidus, Pollio, and Canidius Crassus, who commanded Antony’s land army at Actium. Goldsworthy is correct in denying Antony the “subtlety” and “profound intelligence” of Caesar and Octavian, but he goes too far in arguing that Antony had no vision of the well-being of the empire and cared for nothing beyond personal “glory and profit” (Introduction, esp. 1–5).
- 46 Scott 1925 and 1933; Huzar 1978; Bengtson, 1977; Reinhold 1988, 243–59.
- 47 Pliny, *NH* 9. 119–22; Macrobi., *Sat.* 3.17.14–18.
- 48 Vell. 2.83.2; the source is unknown, but Dellius (who was probably in attendance) is a possibility. Griffin 1977, 22 rightly downplays the incident. Ovid tells the story of Glaucus and his ill-fated love for Scylla in *Met.* 13.895–14.74. One cannot help but wonder if another guest took on the role of Scylla.
- 49 Miller, 2009, 17 remarks that Plancus “danced” the role of Glaucus. Since he was wearing a fishtail, perhaps “slithered” is a more accurate word. Schiff 2010, 224–25 and 238 describes the incident in tabloid fashion but slips in calling Plancus a “sea nymph” – Glaucus was masculine.
- 50 Jullien accepts the immorality: 1892, 153. See Woodward 1983, 215–18. Velleius’ peculiar interest in Plancus reflects the politics of Tiberius’ time, particularly the troubles brought on Tiberius by Munatia Plancina. Plut., *Ant.* 24.7; 28.2; 53–5; desertion in 58. Pelling, 1988 has a number of illuminating comments on Plutarch’s presentation of Antony’s character; simple, readily deceived by those he thought his friends. See also Grant 1972, 177–81 for the revels.
- 51 Cerfaux and Tondriau 1957, 302–04, 476; Pelling 1988, on 24.4, 54.9, 73.6. Huzar 1978, 193–96: “it was all practical politics in governing the east.” Goldsworthy 2010, 11–13 argues that we cannot tell whether Cleopatra was sincere or play-acting in her portrayals as New Isis: we cannot know the inner woman.
- 52 Plut., *Ant.* 29, 53–87.
- 53 See Coleman 1990, esp. 67; Pelling 1988, on 29.2, referring to the highjinks of the young Nero, Otho, and L. Verus: “these excesses of the young and privileged are not especially surprising, but Antony was no longer young” (he failed to grow up!). The grumpy Tiberius and Piso censored Germanicus for excessive informality: Tac., *Ann.* 2.54–5, 59.
- 54 Wiseman 1985, 26–8, 43–7, 263–65. In his speeches Cicero is censorious of such conduct: *in Pis.* 19, 22; *post red. in Sen.* 13; *de Domo* 60; *pro Plancio* 87; *pro Murena* 13.
- 55 Suet., *Aug.* 69–70, adding that Antony named names but Suetonius did not transmit them. See the analysis of Flory 1988, 352–57; Augustus distinguished “between what was suitable

- behavior in real life and acceptable in fun”; also Suet., *Claudius* 1.1; Dio 48.44.3.
- 56 Antony was supposedly jealous of Ventidius’ victories against Labienus and the Parthians: Plut., *Ant.* 34; Dio 49.21–2; Gellius, 15.4.4. Reinhold, 1988, 52 for his possible tomb on the Via Appia.
- 57 MRR 2.412 for triumph “ex Iudaea”; Pliny, *NH* 36.28 for the temple of Apollo Sosianus (or *in Circo*) adjacent to the later theater of Marcellus. MRR 2.417 for consulship; Bengtson 1977, 254–60.
- 58 MRR 2.378–79, 397, 401; Vell. 2.87.3 for execution; Plut., *Ant.* 82.
- 59 MRR 2.442 and 3.137. After Actium: Dio 51.5.6 and 9.1; Plut., *Ant.* 69.2. Kinship to Caesar: App. 2.89 and Suet., *DJ* 83.2. Cf. Reinhold 1988, 130, 133.
- 60 Messalla, Ahenobarbus, Atratinus, and Paullus Lepidus are discussed at the start of this chapter. For Gellius, see Wiseman 1974b, 119–29. Nerva’s brother Lucius (cos. 39) was a friend of Octavian and Antony. Seneca, *de Clem.* 1.10.1 for Octavian’s pardon and “*Sallustium et Cocceios* [the two brothers] *et Dellium et totam cohortem primae admissionis ex adversariorum castris conscripsit.*” *PIR*²C 1223–27. Fonteius: Horace, *Sat.* 1.5.32 (“*Antoni non ut magis alter amicus*”) and Plut., *Ant.* 36.2. Sosius: Vell. 2.86.2. Crassus: Dio 51.3.4; Syme 1986, pp. 30 and 272, misciting Dio first as LI.4.3 and then as LIII.3.4. For the later famous squabble over the *spolia opima* see Livy 4.20; Syme, *RP* 1.417–20; 1986, 274–75; 1939, 308–09; and Reinhold 1988, 162.
- 61 Illyrian war: Wilkes 1969, 46–57; App., *Ill.* 16. Supplies: Dio 49.33.4 and 50.1.3; App. 5.95; Plut., *Ant.* 35.4–5.
- 62 See for example Baumann 1992, 91–8 for Octavian’s (sometimes cynical) use of Octavia and Livia, tools in his propaganda campaign. Sacrosanctity in 35 (Dio 49.38.1). Cicero huffed righteously to Atticus in private about Cleopatra: *ad Att.* 14.8 and 15.5 = SB 367 and 393.
- 63 Dio 49.32.4–5 and 41.1–3, with Reinhold 1988, 63–5 and 76–7; Plut., *Ant.* 36 and 54.4–9, with Pelling 1988. Also Huzar 1978, 199–200; Jos., *AJ* 15.79, 91–5; *BJ* 1.361–62. Predictably, Cleopatra and Antony affirmed that Caesarion was Caesar’s son, whereas Octavian denied it – but had him executed as soon as he could, just in case.
- 64 See Reinhold 1988, 58 and 220–22, arguing that Antony married Cleopatra in 36, i.e., before he divorced Octavia. End of triumvirate: Plut., *Ant.* 35–6, 54.1–5 and 57.4–5 with Pelling *ad loc.* and Plut., *Comp. Ant et Dem.* 4.1; Dio 49.33.3 and 50.3.2.

7 Plancus in transition and Horace, *Ode 1.7*

From Antony to Octavian; the Actium campaign; return to the east, 32–29

By the spring of 32 both parties were marshaling resources and striving to win over the remaining undecided in the now-inevitable civil war. As was the case with other veterans of the recurring political crises, Plancus had been through this before, in 50–49 and 44–43. Neither contender showed much respect for constitutional niceties. Neutrality would be impossible given Plancus' close ties to Antony for ten years, so in deciding whether to stay with Antony or go over to Octavian, it was necessary to determine which side would be the probable winner. And if he were to select the latter, he had to devise his personal safety, a welcome from a man with whom he had never been allied. Caelius' advice to Cicero back in 50 was applicable once again.¹ Although he had not been in Italy since the fleeting visit in 39 at Brundisium, Plancus had presumably kept up a wide correspondence and had a reasonably accurate assessment of Octavian's power. Fully informed as to Antony's strengths and weaknesses, Plancus calculated that he would lose. Antony had been cut off from recruiting in Italy and had never recovered from the heavy losses of the Parthian War of 36.² He was losing the propaganda war by making multiple bad judgments and failing to fight back energetically against Octavian's charges.

Perhaps he found Antony something of a disappointment in another respect as well. Antony was repeating a mistake of Caesar the dictator, for he was neglecting the traditions and values of Rome and moving toward an oriental monarchy. Caesar at least had not abandoned Rome and had retained Roman titles, whereas Antony appeared content to remain permanently in Alexandria, exploiting an undefined supremacy in Roman terms and relying on eastern and Egyptian powers as the New Dionysus or Osiris and consort of the queen. Though not as abandoned to luxurious depravity and irresponsibility as Octavian's propaganda portrayed him, Antony had little sense of how his policies damaged his cause; he showed more drift than decision, acted on impulse without fixed goals, and was fatally indifferent to the west. His

arrangement of client rulers was true statesmanship, as even Octavian recognized but did not admit, but it lacked the flair of his blunders. He did not have the quality of greatness and the ability to attract men of talent that Caesar had possessed, and he alienated many of those who preferred him to his rival.

The two consuls of 32, Domitius Ahenobarbus and Sosius, along with some 300 senators, fled Rome and joined Antony as soon as the seas were open to sailing in early March. Their decision reveals not only the extensive dislike of Octavian among the political elite at Rome but also the extent of ignorance about Antony. Not long after arrival at Alexandria, Domitius and “some others” (Plancus among them?) urged Antony to cut himself free from the queen. It should have been a convincing argument: the newcomers could stress how Cleopatra’s influence was undermining any efforts to defend Antony, while nobody knew better than Plancus the realities of the royal court. She and Canidius Crassus out-argued them, and Antony kept her at his side.³ Canidius proved to be the most loyal of Antony’s high-ranking supporters, and he paid the ultimate price for it, as he was one of few Antonians who were executed, not pardoned. Plancus and Titius must have begun packing their bags to leave what they assessed as a lost cause.

At Athens and evidently soon after the divorce of Octavia (May?), Plancus made his move and abandoned Antony. In 43 he had almost been too slow to shift his allegiance and had had to rely on Antony’s mercy. This time his foresight and timing were on target. He did not rely on *clementia*, a quality this Caesar had conspicuously not exhibited to date, but on information he knew Octavian would appreciate. Accompanied by his nephew Titius, Plancus returned to Rome, perhaps in June. We hear nothing of any effort to stop him; Antony may not have been surprised. The timing reveals the political climate and the accuracy of Plancus’ appraisal, shrewder than that of the collection of senators whose sympathies had just taken them in the other direction. As Syme remarked, “Plancus had never yet been wrong in his estimate of a delicate political crisis. The effect must have been tremendous, alike in Rome and in the camp of Antonius.”⁴ Everybody realized the implications: Antony’s highest associate thought his chief would not win the war which was now on the horizon and sought a new alliance with a man whom he had no reason to like or trust. Plancus as former chief of staff was better informed about Antony than were all those senators who had just opted to join him. Evidently few senators were wholeheartedly committed to either Octavian or Antony, and many changed sides in these years. The outstanding example is Messalla Corvinus, whose boast “I have always been on the better and juster side” we have already noted, and who dubbed Q. Dellius “*desultor bellorum civilium*,” the acrobat (who jumps from one running horse to another) of the civil wars.⁵

To label such individuals immoral defectors or traitors is pointless, as few acted from high-minded principles. Plancus' former legate Furnius stayed with Antony clear to the end, but he may have felt he had no chance of receiving mercy from Octavian whom he had offended over a decade earlier, who may have deprived him of a consulship promised by Antony, and who might execute him without ado. A few years later, however, his son interceded with Octavian and won a pardon: the victor was generous and enrolled the elder Furnius *inter consulares*.⁶ Plancus came not as a suppliant seeking forgiveness but as a high-ranking soldier-diplomat bearing valuable information. He converted out of calculation, not sentiment. Octavian was motivated by identical considerations: not kindness and forgiveness, but eagerness to have what Plancus brought – it more than offset any ill will Octavian may have retained since the friction of the late 40s. Plancus could also point out that he had served the elder Caesar loyally and competently until the Ides of March, had never sided with the assassins, and had never fought Octavian apart from the brush in the confusing Perusine War.

The triumvirate's powers had expired at the end of 33; Octavian ruled by military force, controlled the agenda of the Senate, and ignored any tribune who attempted to thwart him. Simultaneously he justified his actions by resorting to the higher law of moral authority, *auctoritas*. Years later in the *Res Gestae* (25) he claimed that the people of Italy (*tota Italia*) and the west took an oath to him as leader (*dux*) in the campaign at Actium. There was an oath, but one may question how universal and voluntary it was. Plancus furnished some useful entries for Octavian's culminating charges. He spoke against Antony in the Senate and told Octavian that he knew the contents of Antony's will which he and Titius had witnessed. Octavian seized the document, studied it in private, possibly made a few alterations, and read it (selectively?) aloud in the Senate.

Some senators expressed disgust that a man of respectability and repute would so betray another's confidence as to divulge the contents of a will; senders assumed confidentiality and often employed other's couriers of letters, trusting the messengers not to break seals. Velleius interestingly does not mention the will itself, but he does quote a jibe by a Coponius in the Senate, implying that Plancus had been Antony's mentor in misdeeds: "By Hercules, Antony certainly was sinful up until the day you left him." The incident most likely belongs in this context. Perhaps Velleius decided against bringing up the will because it was at least as damaging to Octavian's reputation as to Plancus'.⁷ Octavian's obvious approval of his new allies was soon doubly manifest. He granted a suffect consulship to Titius in 31, replacing Octavian himself, and sharing military command with Statilius Taurus at Actium.⁸ Second, as discussed later, he kept Plancus by his side for the next several

years so as to have constant access to his knowledge of the east.

Some of the terms were already known or suspected, but one was devastating to Antony's cause and seemed to verify much of the gist of Octavian's propaganda: the request to be buried at Alexandria with Cleopatra was seized upon as proof that he had abandoned the land and customs of his ancestors. Just as Octavian had earlier countered Antony's Parthian disaster with his own victories over various Illyrian people, so now he countered Antony's Alexandrine burial plans by beginning construction of an enormous mausoleum in the Campus Martius, a demonstration that he was a true Roman. So great a surprise was the provision for burial in Alexandria that even Antony's adherents at Rome did not dare defend him; rather, they joined in the censure.⁹ In order to avoid a civil war against Antony, the Senate formally declared war against Cleopatra, charging that she had continued to supply aid to Antony after he had been stripped of all his official powers and reduced to a *privatus*.¹⁰

Octavian took with him "all the men of influence, both senators and knights, partly to keep them from stirring up trouble while he was away, but chiefly with the purpose of showing all the world that he had the largest and strongest element of the Romans in sympathy with himself."¹¹ Plancus was likely in the entourage, although he is not mentioned in any source. Since those who held military commands are known and Plancus is not among them, it seems best to assume that his duties were not military but those of an advisor, perhaps without specific title, *comes* in the *cohors amicorum*, a status analogous to that he held with Antony in 34–32. Plancus would be far more valuable to Octavian if he was close at hand during what was doubtless calculated to be a lengthy absence from Rome. Plancus' assumed presence with Octavian 32–29 is central to much of the ensuing discussion.

The fighting ended with the surrender of all of Antony's forces, the capture of Alexandria, and the suicide of the defeated in 30. Octavian now confronted a whole new battery of problems centering on the necessity of settling affairs in the lands which had been under Antony's control since the aftermath of Philippi in 42. Plancus had fuller and more up-to-date information about Antony's manifold political and diplomatic arrangements than anyone in Octavian's entourage; after all, he had been instrumental in formulating many of them. He was, in brief, an "eastern expert." Fully occupied with their struggles in the west through most of the 30s, Octavian and his advisors were not deeply familiar with the complexities of the east, and none of those who had abandoned Antony had stayed with him as long as Plancus. He could guide Octavian through the tangles of eastern provinces and client states and render advice in many fields, for example, as to which kings and dynasts should be confirmed and which deposed in favor of someone else – on

occasion reversing his own decisions of a few years earlier.

Even before Actium he may have pointed out to these client rulers, many of whom he doubtless knew, the consequences of prolonged adherence to Antony and a timely changeover, citing himself and Titius as illustrations of Octavian's forgiving nature.¹² Octavian surely would have wanted to have his extensive knowledge close at hand in the crucial first years after Actium. To depose all who had supported Antony but had not otherwise acted against Octavian would have created years of turmoil in a region where political instability was endemic. Octavian needed to foster stability and order. That he confirmed so many of these rulers attests to Antony's abilities in the original selection – and somebody's recommendations in 30–29.¹³

Horace, *Ode* 1.7: the poet, Plancus, and Teucer

Horace's collected odes of books 1–3 were released to the public in 23. At some date prior to that he dedicated a poem to Plancus which later appeared as the seventh in the first book, one of the so-called "parade odes." Ode 1.7 was sent to Plancus as an individual presentation some time (several years?) before Horace "published" the first three books.¹⁴ Analysis of this poem has been exceedingly complex.¹⁵ The following pages set out my understanding of *carmen* 1.7 based on conclusions reached so far in this study. This interpretation in turn serves as a bridge to the next chapter.¹⁶

Text, Translation, and Summary

Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon aut Mytilenen
aut Epheson bimarisve Corinthi
moenia vel Baccho Thebas vel Apolline Delphos
insignis aut Thessala Tempe.
Sunt quibus unum opus est intactae Palladis urbem 5
carmine perpetuo celebrare et
undique decerptam fronti praeponere olivam;
plurimus in Iunonis honorem
aptum dicet equis Argos ditesque Mycenae;
me nec tam patiens Lacedaemon 10
nec tam Larisae percussit campus opimae,
quam domus Albuneae resonantis
et praeceps Anio at Tiburni lucus et uda
mobilibus pomaria rivis.

Albus et obscuro deterget nubila caelo 15
 saepe Notus neque parturit imbris
 perpetuo, sic tu sapiens finire memento
 tristitiam vitaeque labores
 molli, Plance, mero, seu te fulgentia signis
 castra tenent seu densa tenebit 20
 Tiburis umbra tui. Teucer Salamina patremque
 cum fugeret, tamen uda Lyaeo
 tempora populea fertur vinxisse corona,
 sic tristis adfatus amicos:
 “Quo nos cumque feret melior fortuna parente, 25
 ibimus, o socii comitesque.
 Nil desperandum Teucro duce et auspice Teucris
 certus enim promisit Apollo
 Ambiguam tellure nova Salamina futuram.
 O fortes peioraque passi 30
 mecum saepe viri, nunc vino pellite curas;
 cras ingens iterabimus aequor.”

Others will praise famous Rhodes, Mytilene, Ephesus, the walls of Corinth with its two seas, Thebes famed for Bacchus, Delphi famed for Apollo, or Thessalian Tempe. (5) There are those whose sole care is to celebrate the city of virginal Pallas in perpetual song and to deck their forehead with an olive wreath picked from many sources; many a person sings in honor of Juno (9) or of Argos renowned for horses, or wealthy Mycenae; but as for me, neither enduring Lacedaemon nor the plain of wealthy Larisa impresses me as much as does the home of echoing Albunea (13) and the tumbling Anio and the grove of Tiburnus with its orchards watered by the rushing brooks.

As often the south wind (Notus) cleanses the clouds from the dark sky and does not bring constant rainstorms, (17) so must you, Plancus, wisely remember to put an end to your sadness and the labors of life with unwatered wine, whether the shining military standards detain you or the thick shade (21) of your Tibur will keep you.

When Teucer was fleeing Salamis and his father, he is said to have bound his head with a poplar wreath and to have spoken thus to his sad companions: (25) “Wheresoever a fortune kinder than a parent shall bear us, we shall go, o friends and companions. Do not despair with Teucer as your leader and I command (‘holding the auspices’) for unerring Apollo has promised (29) a clear future and a new Salaminian land. O strong men who have often suffered worse with me, dispel your cares with straight

wine; tomorrow we set out on the vast sea.

The ode divides readily into three sections. Lines 1–14 list famous places in the Greek world and conclude that in the author’s opinion Italian Tibur, with the tumbling Anio river and its groves and orchards and the shrines of Albunea and Tiburnus, is preferable to the Greek sites.¹⁷ Strikingly and at first sight surprisingly, the poet says nothing about the immense and famous temple complex to Hercules Victor (or Invictus) which dominated the approach to the town up the Via Tiburtina. The omission is no accident. Horace saved a subtle reference to Hercules for the concluding section. Nothing more need be said about these straightforward lines, technically known as a priamel.

Lines 15–21, part two, bring another surprise, as readers discover that the ode is not primarily about Horace’s devotion to a charming Italian town and its local deities and pleasant geographical features, but is in fact addressed to Plancus. The shift comes mid-line. Horace tells him that bad times do not last forever, just as the winds will blow away clouds from the sky and do not bring permanent rain. Accordingly, Plancus should remember to set aside his cares with wine (*molli ... mero*, 19), no matter what his present troubles or location may be. There is no information about his “*tristitiam vitaeque labores*” or where he is other than that it is not Tibur. The advice is not to get drunk, but simply to relax with a drink, wherever he might be.

Horace gives no indication that *Tiburis tui* means anything more than that Tibur was a favorite residence of Plancus where he presumably owned property, not that it was the family home as stated by Porphyry and followed by nearly all commentators since. In line 14 Tibur had appeared in the poet’s judgment as preferable to illustrious places in the Greek East, but now (21) it is “your Tibur,” *Tiburis tui*. Horace and Plancus share a love for this town over all others. There are no references to any later event in Plancus’ career or his high standing in the new state in the remaining lines: readers are left with him away from Italy on military service but wanting to return (so Horace) to Tibur. This is the familiar Roman contrast between army duty or public service abroad, *militia*, and time at home, *domi*. What the future holds is unknown to mortals.

The third section of the poem begins with another mid-line shift (21) and continues to the end. Horace abruptly applies to Plancus the myth of the hero Teucer, a story with which ancient readers were more familiar than modern audiences. It runs as follows. Telamon came to Salamis on Aegina where he married Glauké, daughter of King Cychreus, who was said to be the son of Poseidon. (Recall Plancus costumed as Glaucus.) After her death Telamon married Periboea and became the father of the great warrior Ajax. Subsequently, Telamon accompanied Hercules in his attack on King Laomedon

of Troy. Hercules bestowed Laomedon's daughter Hesione on Telamon, and by her Telamon became father of Teucer. During the Trojan War Ajax contended with Odysseus for the arms of the dead Achilles, lesser men striving to succeed a greater. Teucer was at the time away in Mysia and so unable to help his half-brother Ajax. When he lost, Ajax went mad with rage and tried to kill Odysseus and others in the Greek army. The gods were already angry at Ajax for *hybris* in scorning them, so Athena caused him to go mad and in his madness to slaughter some animals. When he discovered what he had done, Ajax killed himself out of shame and entrusted his wife, Tecmessa, and son to Teucer. Because he was not with Ajax at the time, Teucer was unable to fulfill his requests and returned to Salamis empty-handed. Telamon unjustly blamed him for failing to prevent Ajax's death and to protect his widow and son and banished him and his men from their home. Teucer wandered for some years with his band of followers until he finally received encouraging assistance from King Belus of Sidon. He heartened his men by saying that he would lead them to a new home across the sea to which Apollo would show the way. With the help of the god he settled on Cyprus where he founded Salamis, named in remembrance of his original home.

Horace picks up the story well into Teucer's wanderings and leaves Teucer's past unexplained, just as he had said nothing about Plancus' past in the second section of the ode. All readers are told is that in the midst of his flight from home and father, Teucer had been drowning his sorrows in wine (*uda Lyaeo/tempora*) but now puts on a crown of poplar. That is to say, he adopts as a new patron, Hercules, to whom the poplar was sacred, and abandons Dionysus (Lyaeus): sobriety and purposefulness succeed drunken hopelessness. Teucer has a second and more important divine patron, unerring Apollo, who will lead him and his men to a new homeland somewhere across the huge seas.

Analysis

The relationship of the Teucer episode to the preceding two sections of the ode has long been controversial, rendering analysis of the poem "problematic."¹⁸ Rather, it is integral to Horace's message not only to Plancus, as Tibur caps the priamel in section one, but also to the wider subsequent audience when 1.7 was incorporated into books 1–3. The Teucer story is personal and general in applicability. Before turning to it, however, three preliminary considerations must be dealt with. First, why did Horace dedicate an ode to Plancus at all? To observe that he was both one of the most senior consulars by the late 30s and undeniably prominent is true but insufficient: so were many others who were never recipients of a Horatian poem. Importance by itself is not an adequate

answer. Second, what was the relationship between poet and dedicatee? Were they simply acquaintances from the society of Rome and Tibur, or something more like friends who enjoyed one another's company, relaxed and dined together?¹⁹ The latter might seem a bit improbable given that Plancus was roughly twenty years Horace's senior and was intensely involved in politics at the highest level, whereas the poet never held any offices. Literary activity by itself did not generate the income necessary for a comfortable lifestyle, but it did promote entry into the wealthier levels of society. Was Horace flattering Plancus in hope of financial returns? There is no hint of this, but Horace's silence certainly does not mean that nobody other than Maecenas and Augustus rewarded him. Was Plancus in any sense a patron of Horace? And third, can the date of composition of Ode 1.7 be determined?

Horace was polite and deferential, but he neither honored with poems nor sought the patronage of the powerful.²⁰ L. Sestius Quirinalis became suffect in the latter part of 23 and received Ode 1.4 most likely because books 1–3 were released to the public in that year. C. Asinius Pollio (cos. 40), C. Sallustius Crispus, and Q. Dellius were dedicatees of odes in book 2. All were former Antonians who switched sides in a timely fashion; Pollio abandoned the active political life, Sallust operated behind the scenes much like Maecenas whom in some ways he succeeded in 8, and Dellius disappears. None stands close comparison with Plancus in enduring prominence. It is instructive to read the political history and about the campaigns and scan the *fasti* of the 30s and 20s: a multitude of politicians and generals never received a poem or even a mention from Horace. Most conspicuous, perhaps, is the absence of T. Statilius Taurus (suff. 37, ord. 26) and second only to Agrippa among the marshals. Behind him we can place Calvisius Sabinus (cos. 39), Ap. Claudius Pulcher (cos. 38), P. Cornelius Scipio (cos. 35), Paullus Aemilius Lepidus (suff. 34), M. Acilius Glabrio (suff. 33), M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus (cos. 31), M. Titius (suff. 31, Plancus' nephew), M. Licinius Crassus (cos. 30), M. Tullius Cicero (suff. 30, son of the famous statesman), C. Antistius Vetus (suff. 30), M. Lollius (cos. 21), P. Silius Nerva (cos. 20), M. Vinicius (suff. 19), Tarius Rufus (suff. 16), C. Furnius (cos. 17, Plancus' former legate), and two legates of Tarraconensis who never reached the consulship, L. Aelius Lamia (24–22) and P. Carisius (ca. 26–22). Others could be listed, but the point would remain unaffected: Plancus stood out in the crowd of distinguished Roman contemporaries.

The nature of the relationship between Horace and Plancus is unknown. They need not have been friends or even acquaintances: a writer could dedicate a work to a total stranger. There is no invitation to a dinner party or evening of drinking, and Horace does not extend advice about the brevity of life (as to Sestius in 1.4). Many commentators on Horace's works have however inferred, on the basis of 1.7 (and perhaps 3.14), that the poet and Plancus were

in some sense friends. As a hypothesis resting on the slimmest of evidence, I propose that they first met some years before Horace wrote Ode 1.7. Horace fought on the losing side at Philippi in 42 but quickly received a pardon and returned to Italy where he promptly got a job as a *scriba* in the *aerarium*.²¹ Plancus was consul in 42 and stayed in Italy until departing to the east in the late spring of 40, after the Perusine War. It is likely that he initiated his grandiose reconstruction of the Temple of Saturn in these years (it was financed *ex manubiis* from his Raetian campaign). This temple housed the state treasury, but the bullion and stacks of records must have been kept elsewhere during the years when building was taking place. Does it require too much imagination to envision the consular chatting with the young clerk (*scriba*) on the construction site, recognizing his promise as a poet, and putting in a few good words to the right people? He sponsored the orator C. Albucius Silus, though for how long and in what circumstances are unknown. It was incumbent on him to show support to men of letters.²² Plancus' training with Cicero doubtless contributed to his appreciation of literature, although we cannot judge his talents because none of his speeches or any other writings than the few letters to Cicero from 44–43 survive. Plancus along with Trebatius Testa and C. Furnius are among those who were friends of both Cicero and Horace.²³

Regarding the date of composition of Ode 1.7, as so often there is little concrete evidence and argument must proceed by hypothesis and inference. Since books 1–3 were released to the public in 23, all of the poems in those three books must antedate that year. The absence of any reference to Plancus' significance in the 20s – his censorship in 22 or that he proposed “Augustus” in 27 – may indicate that the poem was written somewhat earlier than 27. Most scholars have chosen to date 1.7 somewhere around the year 30,²⁴ but for reasons different from those advanced here. Plancus' decision to abandon Antony, throw his allegiance to Octavian, and return to Rome provided the stimulus for Horace to compose Ode 1.7. It was, then, written to Plancus as an individual at a specific point in time: it was personal, and perhaps not initially intended for general circulation. That came later.

The middle section where Plancus is identified as the addressee provides the essential clue. Commentators have universally assumed that the campaign (“*fulgentia signis castra*”) refers to his time with Antony, i.e., prior to his switch of affiliation in mid-32. This doubtful, as Horace did not write poems to any active Antonians, for obvious reasons of political tact. I argued earlier that on abandoning Antony and joining Octavian in 32, Plancus thereafter served with Octavian on the Actium and Alexandrian campaign and remained with Octavian in the east, presumably returning to Italy with him in time for the triple triumph of August 13–15, 29. The ode belongs to the fairly constricted

period, summer of 32 to summer of 29. Note the tenses of the verb *teneo* in line 19–21: “*seu te fulgentia signis/castra tenent seu densa tenebit/Tiburis umbra tui*.” I would render *tenent* as “detain” and *tenebit* as “will keep.” Plancus is currently on campaign with Octavian but will (soon) return to the “dense shade” of Tibur. What the future may hold is not predicted, but Plancus is following the man who, led by *certus Apollo*, will found a new period in Rome’s history. The omission of Octavian’s name or a clear reference to the army’s location is not a problem, for Plancus would have understood the missing specifics. Analysis of the allusion to Teucer reinforces a date of 32–29 and provides a better appreciate of the ode as a whole.

Romans of prominent families had a penchant for fanciful genealogies ostensibly linking their forebears to figures of myth and legend.²⁵ As far as we know, Plancus never asserted that he was descended from Teucer, but that is not the point. Horace clearly thought the Teucer story was sufficiently similar to Plancus’ troubled life for the latter to recognize its applicability in general terms. In how detailed a fashion Plancus was intended to apply the story to himself is another question, one which we cannot answer with any assurance. Cicero had remarked that the basic lesson to be derived from Teucer could be applied in many settings: one can make a new homeland wherever conditions are better.²⁶ About the same time as Horace wrote Ode 1.7, Vergil assigned a similar speech to Aeneas encouraging his dispirited men on the coast of Africa after the storm drove them away from Italy. Who borrowed from whom is not clear and of no importance here, but the saga of Teucer was “in the air.”²⁷

The poet’s application of the Teucer episode to Plancus is a small-scale version of the question of the extent to which Vergil’s Aeneas “is” Augustus: sometimes he is and sometimes he is not. Some but not all aspects of the story of Teucer are applicable, perhaps doubly. First, the half-brother tie between Teucer and Ajax might also allude to Plancus’ brother L. Plautius Plancus who was adopted out of his birth family and might thus loosely be thought of as a half-brother. As Teucer was in Mysia and unable to prevent Ajax’s death, so Plancus was in Gaul and unable to save his brother in Italy or influence the triumvirs as they composed the list of the proscribed.²⁸

Second, somewhere between the reasonable and the fantastic lies the related question whether one can associate Teucer’s half-brother Ajax with Plancus’ master Antony. Ajax does not appear in the ode, nor does Antony; but they lurk just out of view. As we will see, the issue is not kinship but similarity of character. At this point we turn to the second Ajax, Antony. In the *Iliad* where so many Greek heroes and deities received the basic characteristics of their personalities, Teucer is frequently noted as fighting from behind the huge shield of Ajax. For a decade Plancus “sheltered” behind Antony, owing his prominence more to his “big brother” than to his own merits, and in the

preceding years Plancus and Antony had both “sheltered” behind the greater Caesar, as in the earlier stages of the legend Achilles had overshadowed Ajax and Teucer alike. Antony exhibited some of the features of Ajax in Sophocles’ play, which Plancus presumably knew. B.M.W. Knox has described Ajax in terms that by a substitution of names apply equally well to Antony:

Ajax is presented to us in this play as the last of the heroes. His death is the death of the old Homeric (and especially Achillean) individual ethos which had for centuries of aristocratic rule served as the dominant ideal of men’s nobility and action, but which by the fifth century had been successfully challenged and largely superseded.

(Knox, *HSCP* 65 (1961), 1-37, quote on 20-21)

Knox goes on to remark that Ajax is steadily presented as larger than life, a man of physical action not of thought, lacking a sense of responsibility to anyone but himself, almost animalian, and in the end unfit for an ordered, civilized society.²⁹ Many historians have argued that Antony exhibited these same characteristics: immature, irresponsible, courageous where need be but easily led into dissipation, long on action and short on thought. As in legend Ajax contended with Odysseus for the arms of the fallen and far greater Achilles, so in reality Antony contended with Octavian (like Odysseus, a better thinker than warrior) for the power of the dead Caesar. Like Ajax, Antony refused to listen to appeals to reason from friends (Roman political allies) and wife (Tecmessa = Octavia?), and he refused to yield, adjust, or learn. His apparent infatuation with Cleopatra could easily be regarded as madness or the result of witchcraft, as Octavian’s propaganda proclaimed. He certainly lacked a sense of responsibility to Rome as a whole and was unfit for the new state Octavian slowly created. And like Ajax, he saw the ruin of his life and salvaged what little honor he could by falling on his sword. Toward the end of the play, Odysseus befriended Teucer, whom he had formerly opposed, and thereby won his respect; much the same can be said of Octavian’s changed attitude toward Plancus.

In Euripides’ “Helen,” another drama with which Plancus would have been familiar given the literary focus of Roman education, Teucer came to Egypt and visited Helen. She warned him to flee the Egyptian king; Teucer departed and later found his new home on Cyprus under the leadership of Apollo.³⁰ Plancus in his “wanderings” under Antony governed both Asia and Syria, spent some time in Egypt, fled an Egyptian queen, and then turned to follow Octavian, a strong promoter of the cult of Apollo.

Plancus must adopt Teucer’s attitude: recognize that bad times like bad weather do not last forever, change his course of action by abandoning

Dionysus (Lyaeus), accept the guidance of a new heavenly patron Apollo, and persuade his discouraged followers to buck up and endure a bit longer. In essence,

Let us relax and forget our troubles this evening with wine, and tomorrow set sail across the vast seas to our new homeland. Where this may be, I do not know, but as *dux* and *augur* I will adhere to the leadership of *certus* (unerring) Apollo.

This was Horace's personal message to Plancus in 32–29. Interestingly, writing well over a century later Plutarch reports the story that just before Antony's death in 30 people saw and heard Dionysus leaving Alexandria, i.e., abandoning Antony.³¹ If a version of this tale was in circulation by 32, Plancus' decision to shift his allegiance to Apollo was perfectly timed.

As Teucer sought salvation from his troubles through dedication to Apollo, so Plancus was to do the same by recognizing Apollo as guiding Octavian. The emphasis on Apollo as Teucer's patron is seemingly a strange choice on Horace's part, even though it was an established part of the story. All through the Trojan War Apollo favored the Trojans, and on several occasions he saved Trojan warriors from death at the hands of one or another Greek hero.³² It is out of character for this steadfastly pro-Trojan god now to rescue and guide a Greek, so what was Horace telling Plancus here? The explanation of this anomaly must be that in "converting" from Dionysus and despair to Apollo and bright hope to start a new life, Teucer had in effect become a new person, a Trojan. So Plancus had "converted" from the losing cause of Antony to the triumphant Octavian who waged the Actium campaign largely under the aegis of Apollo. The parallel is not precise but close enough to be effective. Teucer had been banished by his father from his Hellenic origins, whereas Plancus was returning to the homeland he had left due to political circumstances in 40; his years under Antony are thus seen as a sort of exile. The "conversion" and fresh start are the essential features in comparing Plancus with the mythical hero.

Plancus, with his nephew Titius and presumably other members of his retinue, chose to abandon Antony for Octavian at a critical time, the crucial final months of the heated propaganda campaign that preceded the declaration of war on Cleopatra. Plancus' conversion probably provided the immediate stimulus for Horace to compose Ode 1.7. Other Antonians or neutrals had made the switch a bit earlier, but Plancus' decision and timing were decisive and must have influenced others whose names are lost to us.³³ The correctness and shrewdness of his assessment stand in sharp contrast with that of the 300 or so senators who accompanied the consuls of 32 in fleeing to Antony in 32.

They must have realized shortly after arrival that they had jumped the wrong way at the wrong time. We wish we had a full list of their names and fates.

It quickly became clear that the young Caesar was going to be forgiving toward former opponents. In a policy of *clementia*, modelled on that of the elder Caesar in the 40s, Octavian ostentatiously did not proscribe. Rather, he welcomed former Antonians and neutrals into his own following, granting pardon to nearly all who sought it, and rewarding many with high office.³⁴ Plancus thus became a precedent for many, a role model: he as Teucer following *certus Apollo* to a new homeland across the *ingens aequor* could be universalized. The *carmen* to Plancus was applicable not simply to him and those who had accompanied him in 32, but to all neutrals and former Antonians, men who had stayed out of active politics or been on the wrong side. More than at the time of the ode's composition, Apollo could now be understood as guiding Octavian and all who joined him. Teucer is no longer simply leading his band of despondent refugees, nor is Plancus hoping for clear weather and better times just for himself and those with him. Apollo guided Octavian's forces at Actium, as Vergil described in the *Aeneid*, and continues to guide Octavian, now completing the elegant Temple to Apollo adjacent to his own residence on the Palatine Hill.³⁵ Legendary Greeks and contemporary Romans must put the past behind them and follow Apollo to – or in the creation of – a new homeland. In this political and cultural context Horace decided that he could place the originally personal ode to Plancus in a conspicuous position when he released three books of odes to the public in 23.

Asia Minor and the return to Rome

A well-known feature of the mature Octavian is his caution, his policy of moving slowly so as to be able to adjust course as circumstances demanded, to make haste slowly. We see a good early example in early 29, his fifth consulship, when he passed several months on Samos and in Asia Minor. The province of Asia, the wealthiest in the *imperium*, had suffered terribly from the financial exactions levied by Cassius in 42, from the stiff penalties imposed by Antony in 41, and adjoining Caria was the chief casualty of Labienus' invasion in 40. The economy of the province and neighboring Bithynia was in bad shape, and the provincials welcomed Octavian as the restorer of peace and stability. Delegations from the leading cities came to Octavian asking for permission to initiate his worship, to extend to their new ruler the long-standing Greek practice of honoring a king and benefactor with the trappings of divinity: temple, priests, worship. While Romans were familiar with the practice through their two centuries of increasing involvement in Hellenistic

politics, it was not acceptable for living Romans to be worshiped, and the idea would be highly unpopular in the west.

These requests brought up fresh problems for Octavian as he began to replace the ad hoc measures of wartime necessity and confront the realities of governing in a time of peace. A new world order was coming into being and he was at the center of it. He had to define himself and his status in a way that two very different types of inhabitants could both comprehend and accept: Roman citizens and provincials. The latter, of course, varied from urbane Greeks to unsophisticated people of the countryside. His current position was unprecedented: no ruler had ever possessed the enormous and unrivalled power that was Octavian's after the elimination of Antony – not Caesar, not Pompey, no Hellenistic monarch, not even Alexander the Great. The decisions Octavian reached laid the foundation for what became the imperial cult, the worship of Roma and the deified emperors as a means of promoting imperial unity. Worship of rulers was in reality more a matter of expressions of political loyalty and gratitude for a range of benefactions (notably peace and orderly government) than religious beliefs in the modern sense. Religious language and mechanisms, in other words, were the vehicles by which the inhabitants affirmed their loyalty to Roman rule and the head of state.

The influence of the decisions in 29 may have extended in another direction as well. He declined direct worship and attempted a compromise by distinguishing between the two classes of petitioners and linking them through the widespread Hellenistic practice of worship of the divine embodiment of Rome, *thea Roma*. Roman citizens resident in Asia and Bithynia were to assemble at a *temenos* (sacred precinct) in the provinces' chief cities, Ephesus and Nicaea, and there worship the goddess Roma and the *hero* Julius Caesar. (He had been deified in 42, so worship was appropriate.) There were no religious expressions regarding Octavian. Noncitizens, on the other hand, were to establish a *temenos* at Pergamum and Nicomedia and there worship Roma and Octavian's *genius*.³⁶ Everybody had a *genius*, but his was pre-eminent and worthy of the sort of honors that were also rendered to the gods. But the policy fell short of deification, as he did not receive the full complement of temple, priests, and ritual. Thus he sought to establish different policies regarding Roman citizens and all others, preserving the Romans' tradition of not worshiping a living human, no matter how powerful, while simultaneously recognizing the Greeks' and other people's long-standing practice of divine cult for their rulers. Romans could accept this while dismissing the Greek practices as typical Greek fulsome flattery.³⁷ Nothing prevented deification after his death, but that was left to the future.

This distinction between western/Roman and eastern/Greek notions proved unworkable in practice. The problem was not that citizens were to go to one

city and the provincials to another, but rather the concepts and terminology they were to adopt. Provincials had long shown their gratitude to kings through cult practices for their immediate rulers who had demonstrated their power through benefactions. Favors and especially peace and prosperity were the gifts of gods or at the very least of a ruler worthy of honors similar to those shown the gods. Octavian's new supremacy was obviously the dawn of a new age and he was a new type of ruler, far more powerful than any Macedonian, Ptolemaic, Seleucid, or Attalid ruler had ever been, and Roman rule was to be far more enduring than the frequently short-lived Hellenistic potentates and, once he left for Italy, far more remote. Simple gratitude even expressed in religious ways was insufficient. Honors rendered to him should exceed those paid to earlier rulers, but how and in what words? He was manifestly more than a mere mortal: godlike if not a god, *theios* if not a *theos*. The Roman concept of the *genius*, a person's eternal generative power, was incomprehensible to the provincials. How does one worship a person's *genius*, whatever that is, but yet not regard the person as a god? He declined direct worship, but if he was not a god then what was he? He was very much alive and fairly young, so he could expect many more years of life before he could legitimately even be called a *hero*.

More serious was the proper attitude and terminology for Roman citizens. How were *cives* to refer to him? How should they retain the association with the deified Julius Caesar but without undue emphasis? Calling Octavian "Caesar," especially "Caesar *divi filius*," had served so far, but it was no longer what the times required. He now needed to move away from association with Caesar, which recalled the bad old times of Octavian the ruthless triumviral warlord and proscriber, was too close to an arrogant proclamation of divinity, and did not confer sufficient honor. As they wintered on Samos and then prepared to set out for Rome, Octavian, Plancus, and the other councilors must have begun thinking of his eventual position at Rome and how he should be honored. They sought a new universal concept, a new word or perhaps a familiar one given new meaning which citizens and provincials could accept, but yet one which did not arrogantly transgress the borders between human and divine. His unprecedented position demanded an unprecedented title, a creative expansion of the Latin political vocabulary to meet the new demands. The solution was reached over the next two years and was made public in early 27. How it was reached and who devised it cannot be known, but they are apt topics for speculation.

Octavian postponed his return to Rome both because he had to settle affairs around the east and because he wasn't sure what to do when he finally got home to post-war Italy. A good portion of his time in 30 to early 29 must have been devoted to investigating Antony's arrangements and determining where

to make modifications. A steady stream of Antony's appointees flowed to him, anxious about what their future. Octavian and his councilors must have spent many hours poring over records and conducting interviews before ultimately determining to retain most of Antony's selections, announcing decisions after a suitable period of suspense. That Octavian confirmed so many of Antony's appointees and replaced only a few allows the inference that he relied on the expertise of Romans with firsthand knowledge to compensate for his own unfamiliarity. Besides, as Sartre has put it, "Octavian could not afford to depose Antony's clients, because he had no trustworthy replacements available,"³⁸ a verdict as applicable for Asia Minor as the Syrian lands. Based on his decade of service under Antony, Plancus would have been able to convince Octavian of the fundamental soundness of Antony's handling of the complexities of this enormous region. Plancus had governed both Asia in 40–39 and Syria in 36–35 and been Antony's "chief of staff." He will have been thoroughly familiar with many of the dynasts and known them personally. M. Titius should be added to the list of probable advisors. It must be admitted, however, that Plancus' presence is only probable, not attested, so his influence cannot be demonstrated. And the victor never acknowledged his indebtedness, either to Antony or to anybody else.

The following is a broad survey of the Roman East as Plancus would have known it in the first years of Octavian's supremacy, roughly 30–25. Direct rule was restricted, as Octavian's government preferred to rely on client rulers wherever possible: they knew the particularities of their peoples and areas and as long as they were trustworthy saved Rome the troubles of administration. Syria was the only province north of Egypt and south of Anatolia,³⁹ where there were just two, Bithynia and Asia. The four legions plus auxiliaries of Syria were the primary garrison of the entire eastern frontier, and the *legatus Augusti* had general supervisory powers over the adjacent territories. The great exception to the general pattern of confirmation, of course, is that Octavian annexed Egypt as more or less his personal property and parceled out among a variety of local rulers promising faithfulness to Rome the lands that Antony had granted to Cleopatra and her children in 34. Two legions based near Alexandria served more to ensure Egypt's peace and quiet than to fight any possible Parthian war. The most familiar example of a ruler to be retained is Herod of Judaea. He came to Octavian, laid down the crown, pointed out that he had not been at Actium and so had never taken up arms against Octavian, stressed his loyalty to Antony and promised the same to Octavian, and was promptly confirmed as king of Judaea. He was conspicuously adept in tailoring his policies to harmonize with those of his new master until his death in 4 BC.

Any map of the Syrian region would have revealed its complexities. Surrounded by client states, Syria did not touch another Roman province, and

it encompassed a number of autonomous states, their rulers now often titled “tetrarchs,” in the Lebanon and anti-Lebanon hill country and desert stretching to the Euphrates, such as Emesa and Palmyra. Nabataea centered at Petra lay to Syria’s east and southeast; mountainous Commagene under Antiochus I was sandwiched between Syria and Anatolia. To the north of the Amanus mountains, Antonian Anatolia passed virtually unaltered. In Cilicia, downgraded from a province and attached to Syria, was a “patchwork” of small dynasties and autonomous cities such as Tarsus, entrusted to Octavian’s former tutor Athenodorus. Archelaus retained Cappadocia, and Polemo kept an enlarged Pontus. In the central highlands between Cappadocia to the east, Pontus to the north, and the Roman province of Asia to the west was the vaguely defined district of Galatia-Paphlagonia-Phrygia-Cilicia Tracheia. Here Octavian retained Amyntas, who had turned over Sextus Pompey to Titius in 35, gone over to Octavian on the eve of Actium, and had the tough job of imposing order on the ever-turbulent Gauls and pacifying the Pisidians, Isaurians, and Homonadenses.⁴⁰

In 25, well after Octavian and his party had returned to Rome, Amyntas was killed and his kingdom was annexed as the province of Galatia; Ancyra served as the capital and dominated the northern portion, a series of colonies settled by discharged soldiers controlled the southern sector. Galatia had a garrison of one legion and several auxiliary units, but they were withdrawn in the first years AD; for the next half-century and more there were no legions along the Euphrates north of Syria, whose soldiers were the principal Roman force to protect all the east outside of Egypt. Major changes came in the 70s when Commagene was annexed and Galatia was combined with Cappadocia and parts of Armenia to make a huge province and legions occupied base camps along the Euphrates, from Zeugma in the south northward to Samosata, Melitene, and Satala.

Immediately on his return to Rome in the summer of 29 he proclaimed the civil wars to be at an end and closed the doors to the Temple of Janus symbolizing the return of peace. He realized that he had to initiate extensive repairs to the state so damaged by years of ruinous internal strife and in effect to begin the construction of a new state. Simultaneously he had to modify his own position: the triumviral powers had expired at the end of 33, he could not continue indefinitely as *dux* under the terms of the oath of 32, and it was incompatible with Roman tradition for the same person to hold the consulship year after year. Experience taught him to avoid the mistakes of his adoptive father, too close association with the gods and increasing tendency toward deification,⁴¹ the dictatorship, continuous consulships, and apparent desire for kingship. But he had no guide for positive policies. The sacred precincts, high honors, and worship in the Greek East would not work at Rome. The unerring

Apollo of Ode 1.7.32f. was not as *certus* as Horace had written: the certitude of the immortal was not obvious to mortal men.

As the return of Octavian from the east came to be the initiation of the transition to the Principate, so Ode 1.7 signals the transition to a new phase in Plancus' career, from the supporter of Antony to the advisor of Octavian and then a councilor of Augustus. As Teucer said, "Tomorrow we set out on the vast sea" to build a new home, so Plancus could have said, in effect, "Tomorrow we set out on the vast work of rebuilding Rome, joining Octavian and under the patronage of Apollo." Whether the poet's encouragement to be like Teucer actually influenced his actions cannot be known. It is clear, however, that Plancus put the past behind him and began a new life. Plancus' role in the formation of the Augustan Principate, the new Golden Age, is the subject of the following chapter.

Notes

- 1 *Fam.* 8.14.3 = SB 97. When fighting starts, one should join not the juster side but the probably victorious.
- 2 Brunt 1971, 502–07; Bengtson 1977, 184–85.
- 3 Plut., *Ant.* 56–60. Plancus was no longer the "*humillimus adsentator reginae et infra servum cliens*" ("scrounging flatterer of the queen and a client worse than a slave") of Vell. 2.80.1.
- 4 Syme 1939, 281. Reinhold 1988, 85–90: the consuls and senators left Rome in early March, Antony divorced Octavia in May, and Plancus and Titius left Antony in early June; cf. Pelling 1988, 254–56; Plut., *Ant.* 58.2; Vell. 2.83.2; Dio 50.3. Huzar 1978, 207 also held that the divorce was "the decisive factor" in Plancus' move. When Ahenobarbus abandoned Antony sometime later, Antony sent his baggage afterward: he may have done the same for Plancus and Titius.
- 5 Sattler 1960, 18 with n. 35. Corvinus: Plut., *Brut.* 53.3. His patrician blood ensured his welcome with Octavian. Dellius: Vell. 2.84.2; Seneca, *Suas.* 1.8.
- 6 Seneca, *de Ben.* 2.25; Dio 51.16.1 could include him and 52.42.4 says he was adlected among the consulars. The year of the lost consulship is unknown; possibly 31 (Dio 48.35; 50.10); App. 5.73. If 31, then Octavian gave the post to one of his own followers. Wiseman 1971, 233 no. 190: designate for 29. He, not his son, is probably the Furnius of Horace, *Sat.* 1.10.86; cf. Treggiari 1973, at 259–60; Syme agrees, 1986, 205–06. Furnius' friendship with Cicero was another reason for dislike of Octavian: *Fam.* 10.25–6 = SB 403, 424.
- 7 See *Att.* 1.15; 2.20 and 4.17 = SB 13, 40 and 91; *Fam.* 4.4 = SB 203. See Nicholson 1994. Vell. 2.83.2.
- 8 At the end of 33 Octavian became a *privatus* but retained *imperium*, immense *auctoritas*, tribunician sacrosanctity, and was consul designate for 31: nobody dared challenge him. Dio 50.13.5; *MRR* 2.420 for Titius' suffect consulship. Pardons: Dio 50.4.4 and 13.6; cf. 49.1.5–6. for a parallel; Plut., *Ant.* 62.2–3. Dio 50.25 and Suet., *Aug.* 29.5; cf. Millar 1973, at 52–3 for Taurus' prominence. The will: Plut., *Ant.* 58.3–4; Dio 50.2–4 with Reinhold 1988, 90–4. Whether Octavian edited it is unknowable; on 91 he quotes Syme 1939, 282: "The

- truth of the matter is lost forever.” See also Crook 1957 and Huzar, 1978, 207.
- 9 Kraft 1967, esp. 195; Dio 50.4.2; Suet., *Aug.* 100.4 means that he completed the mausoleum in 28, and this implies a commencement perhaps four years earlier.
 - 10 Octavian used material from Dellius “and others” in his hortatory speech delivered before Actium: Dio 50.3.1. See Reinhold 1981–82, 97–103 and 1988, 93f. Cleopatra was charged with *maiestas*. Dio 50.4–6; 26.3–4; Plut., *Ant.* 60. *Res Gestae* 24 describes Antony simply as “*is cum quo bellum gesseram*,” (“he with whom I waged war”) avoiding an admission that he was a *hostis*; contra and wrongly, Suet., *Aug.* 17.1.
 - 11 Dio 50.11.5; *Res Gestae* 25: 300 senators. Ahenobarbus left Antony shortly before Actium and died not long after the battle: Dio 50.13.6.
 - 12 Plancus’ role in all this is speculation on my part, but see Dio 50.13.7–8; 23.1; 27.8–9; 51.7 and 16. As successor to Deiotarus, Amyntas of Galatia must have known full well the perils of a client king in a Roman civil war. Plancus could point out his contribution to the suppression of Sextus Pompey: App. 5.136–37.
 - 13 That Octavian relied on Plancus because he had been able to win over the Italian municipal classes since he was one of them, as argued by G. Ferrara, *Cultura* 6 (1968), 506–10, is doubtful. Octavian himself was a *municipalis*, and Plancus had not been in Italy enough to have had much influence with anybody.
 - 14 West 1995, 16 speaks of “this dazzling collection, like nothing else in classical literature,” and remarks on 84 that the recipients “are sophisticated people and they speak in a sophisticated code.” The opening nine poems are in different meters, and the first seven are “addressed to some of the most important men in Rome.” Literary analyses are not my concern and seem prone to historical errors. West 1995, 30–7 has Plancus serve as governor of Asia in the early 40s and omits his consulship. Lowrie 1997, 104 says Plancus “invented” the name Augustus but with no evidence. Zetzel 1982, 95 calls Plancus “the consul of 27 BC.” Levi 1997, 65 and 146–47: Plancus “as censor proposed the title Father of the Country, Pater Patriae” and that “as consul he proposed that the name Augustus be given official status.” Plancus was consul in 42, governed Asia in the late 40s, proposed “Augustus” in 27, served as censor in 22, and was probably long dead by the time Valerius Messalla proposed *pater patriae* in 2 BC.
 - 15 Citation of the many scholarly analyses would overwhelm my text, so I have noted only a few places where my conclusions differ significantly from others’. Recent analyses are those of West 1995; Lowrie 1997; Moles 2002; and Mayer 2012. While the poem is doing several things at one time, as do most of Horace’s odes, the focus here is on its historical significance, as a document relevant to the understanding of Plancus’ role in Roman history in the immediate post-Actium years.
 - 16 I have followed the text and punctuation of Moles 2002, 86. None of the MSS variants affect my overall interpretation. Moles’ text and notes deal fully with much of the earlier commentary.
 - 17 West 1995, 30–1 argues that by giving the Greek cities their stock Homeric epithets Horace was making fun of long Greek epics and claiming that Tibur’s Albunea and Tiberinus are equal to the Olympians.
 - 18 See Williams 1968, 83–5 and 763–64; Santirocco 1986, 36–9, both of whom follow Vaio 1966 at 171. Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 93: the Teucer story is “somewhat loosely attached” to the body of the poem.
 - 19 See White 2007 for the question of friendship and patronage in Horace. *Epistles* 17 and 18 are his versions of *de Amicitia*: friends dine and relax together, share confidences and

- pastimes. White stresses that friends can also be patrons and vice versa. There is no clear evidence that Horace and Plancus were close friends, unless we extrapolate socializing from their mutual love for and residence near Tibur.
- 20 For the names in this paragraph, see Syme 1986, 50–63, 382–404, and his consular *fasti* on 454–58. Ode 1.4 to Sestius “was not written to honour a consul or consul designate, as might happen, and it yields no hint about public service.” A number of these commanders were active in the conquest of Tarraconensis in the 20s and early ‘teens (cf. Pliny, *NH* 4.111 for *tres arae Sestianae Augusto dicatae*). Statilius: “no hint anywhere.” Horace did not honor the legates of Augustus’ province who conducted extensive campaigns. The flurry of nobles who appear in book 4 are too late to be of interest here.
 - 21 Suet., *Vita Horatii* 7–8. Perhaps Pollio and Maecenas helped him get the position which gave him financial independence, as they approved of his early poetry (*Sat.* 1.10.85; 2.6.36–7). Maecenas gave him the Sabine estate in the mid-30s, and this increased his financial freedom (*Sat.* 2.6.1–5, 23–39).
 - 22 White 1978; Wiseman 1982, 28–9; Zetzel 1982; Saller 1982.
 - 23 Treggiari 1973. Reckford 1969 p. 50, Horace’s “friend Plancus.”
 - 24 For instance, West 1995, 30–7, “when Plancus was deciding to change sides,” too old to go on campaign with Antony as he was in his upper fifties and ready to retire to leisure at Tibur. Moles 2002 argues that Horace wrote the poem when Plancus was censor-designate, i.e., in 23, by which time he had been “rehabilitated” under Augustus, but devised a dramatic date of a decade earlier. Mayer 2012, 17, 19 is cautious: many odes circulated for some years before being collected into books, but he seems to infer a date around 30 for 1.7. Nisbet and Hubbard 1970 p. 91 opt for composition in 32–0. Bliss 1960, 46 has a late date, 23–2 (as does Moles) and wrongly labels Plancus “the last of the Munatii” (40, 43): his grandchildren are featured in the Epilogue.
 - 25 Wiseman 1974a. For example, the Antonii claimed descent from a supposed son of Hercules named Anton (Plut., *Ant.* 4; Pelling 1988). The alleged descent of the Julii from Julius/Iulus son of Aeneas and thus grandson of Venus/Aphrodite was the Caesars’ passion and then government policy, not a pastime.
 - 26 Cic. *Tusc.* 5.108: “itaque ad omnem rationem Teucris vox accommodari potest: ‘patria est ubicumque est bene.’” He may have been citing Pacuvius.
 - 27 *Aeneid* 1.195–200. The ultimate model for the speech is Ulysses in *Odyssey* 12.208–20. (encouraging his crew to escape Scylla). Moles 2002, 99 believes Vergil borrowed from Horace, but Mayer 2012 claims Horace borrowed from Vergil. Caligula even quoted the Vergilian version in a pep talk to his army: Suet., *Cal.* 45.2.
 - 28 The similarity is very rough: Ajax was older than and superior to Teucer, whereas Plautius Plancus was probably younger and less prominent than Plancus.
 - 29 For Teucer in the *Iliad*: 8.226–30, 12.336–40, 13.266–70, and 15.437–40. The passages stress the closeness between him and Ajax, which Horace may have intended to apply to Plancus and his brother, if, as I argued earlier, Plancus was on good terms with his brother and no way responsible for his death. Knox 1961, quote 20–1; see also Knox 1964).
 - 30 Euripides, “Helen” 68–163. See Conacher 1967, 286–92.
 - 31 Plut., *Ant.* 75.3–4.
 - 32 See Miller 2009, esp. 66–75. Millar has a detailed discussion of the Temple on the Palatine, vowed in 36 and dedicated on October 9, 28: Vell. 2.81.3; Dio 49.15.5; *Acta Arvalia*. For Apollo assisting the Trojans, chiefly Hector and Aeneas, see *Iliad* 5.344–46, 431–60; 7.272 and 15.320–27; 16.94, 527–29, 721–30; 17.319–34; 20.79–111; 21.544–48.

- 33 Syme 1939, 281; cf. 1986, 385 for the “smooth and elegant” Plancus.
- 34 Augustus’ claim in *Res Gestae* 3 that he offered pardon to all citizens who sought it is an exaggeration. P. Canidius Crassus, Antony’s loyal army commander at Actium, was one of a few to suffer execution. One wonders if Horace was taking a swipe at Canidius’ reputation with his portrayal of the witch and poisoner Canidia in Epodes 5 and 17 and Satire 1.8; if not a relative, she could easily be a freedwoman. Octavian was ruthless in exterminating the assassins of Caesar.
- 35 Miller 2009 assesses Apollo’s importance to Octavian in the pre-Actium period, including the scandalous *cena secretior* of 38 at which he was costumed as Apollo; and then Apollo at Actium. Octavian built an open-air shrine to Apollo on the site of an ancient temple to him at Actium (Strabo 7.7.6). For Apollo in Vergil see 66–75: Apollo aids the forces of Octavian and drives away those of Antony and Cleopatra.
- 36 Dio 51.20–1 for Asia Minor and the return to Rome and further honors. Pergamum also received the right to hold athletic games in Octavian’s honor. In 9 the province adopted the suggestion of the governor to make the ruler’s birthday the start of their year. See Price 1984, esp chaps. 1–3.
- 37 Previously, individual Greek cities had petitioned rulers for permission to establish temples and priesthoods. In 29 the request had come from the provincial assemblies (*koina*); this put the practice on a new basis (Price 1984, 53–7).
- 38 Sartre 2005, 54.
- 39 Cilicia was mostly attached to Syria. The core of Herod’s Judaea was annexed as an equestrian province in AD 6, Cappadocia in 17, and Commagene in 72.
- 40 Marek 2016, 313–26 provides an overview of the Augustan settlement in Anatolia, with ready comparison to Antony’s. See also Mitchell, 1993 vol. I which emphasizes Galatia and has good maps. Polemo’s dynasty retained Pontus until AD 64, when it was annexed and attached to Bithynia. For Syria, Judaea, and the small principalities at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, see Sartre 2005. Octavian had to act quickly after Actium to preserve stability, and “Antony’s friends did not suffer much overall as a result of his defeat” (p. 54). Whether Plancus had any influence on decisions reached after 29 is unknowable.
- 41 If Weinstock is correct in *Divus Julius*, Caesar had intended to institute the cult of himself as Jupiter Julius, identified with Vediovis (the young Jupiter), supposedly a form of Apollo. Caesar put out a story that his niece Atia had become the mother of Octavian by Apollo: the story may date from Caesar’s decision to name his great-nephew his heir. “It was the divine legitimation of his succession, and the divine ancestor was Apollo, the god of the Gens Iulia.” Further, “without Caesar’s initiative Augustus would not have” promoted Apollo as he did “and Apollo would not have become the most popular god of his age.”

8 Plancus the Augustan

Mid-32–22

Overview

The 20s were a time of caution and experimentation. Octavian was not as *certus* as the Apollo of Horace's *Ode* 1.7: he lacked the prophetic deity's ability to see into the future. The contrast with Caesar's tendency to make sharp and often controversial changes is striking. He knew that he had to avoid Caesar's errors but not how to proceed. From the moment he achieved military and political superiority with the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra, Octavian determined to break from a ruthless past, uncomfortably similar to those of Sulla and the *adulescentulus carnifex* Pompey, and acquire a fresh image. A policy of calculated acts of *clementia* to supplicants of varying prior loyalties was a step in the right direction.¹ Demonstrations that he would not hold grudges must have caused many former opponents to emerge from quietude or hiding and breathe more freely than they had in years.

Gestures were beneficial, but broad reforms were far better. Here we encounter an insurmountable obstacle. Speaking of 27 but in a judgment applicable to prior years and down to his own time some two centuries later, Cassius Dio stresses that privacy and secrecy cloaked all major decisions; no one outside the small circle of unnamed imperial advisors was ever in a position to know precisely how decisions were reached and who made them.² With rare exceptions, historians in antiquity could do little more than note debate and describe results. We cannot go beyond the limitations of our sources and get behind the drawn curtains and closed doors. It is one thing to record results and policies, quite another to be certain how those results and policies were reached. It is never possible to know the identity of all the imperial advisors at any time, and emperors naturally consulted different men as occasions demanded. In the 20s there were as yet no permanent specialized

bureaus or departments; their appearance is usually traced to beginnings under Claudius.

We cannot compile a full list of Octavian's councilors at this time or know which voices carried the most weight. He is a notoriously elusive figure, and his advisors even more so. The passing years and the civil wars had removed many senators and nonaristocratic confidants whose knowledge and experience would have been invaluable. Most influential were Maecenas and Agrippa. Statilius Taurus (cos. 37, 26) belongs in the group; like Agrippa he was more a military man than a politician or diplomat.³ Octavian preferred to rely on experienced senators who had a sound feeling for that segment of public opinion which counted, men such as M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus (cos. 31). C. Asinius Pollio (cos. 40) could have been among the imperial advisors, but he opted out of active politics to write history and literary criticism.⁴

Plancus was perhaps the only surviving close associate of Caesar, as strife and the passage of time had removed many from the scene. The elder Balbus had assisted Octavian from 44; he was now dead or in retirement, though his nephew was still active. There is no trace of Oppius and Matus after the late 30s. Fortune as well as abilities continued to serve Plancus well. He was of just the right age to have risen to power under Caesar, placed so as to perceive firsthand Caesar's brilliance and the errors in his political judgment, but yet not too old for active service under Octavian. One can reverse the verdict of his detractors to read not that "Plancus was a time-server," but that "the times served Plancus."

Plancus was in a select group of largely invisible advisors, valued for his diplomatic smoothness⁵ and steadily influential; he was not mere window dressing trotted out on a few select occasions. His seniority and extensive experience in navigating the turmoil of the civil wars; his old and deep friendship with Cicero; and his well-attested eloquence, caution, and reluctance to act rashly fused to make him well suited to be among the councilors as the *gubernator* Octavian steered the ship of state through hazardous and murky waters where no clear channel was visible. Stability and regularity returned, conveniently summarized in the phrase *res publica restituta*.

Plancus' participation in the restoration of the Roman state, however, is attested in only three settings, and at first sight it's as though he was brought out of a closet or pulled off a shelf to play an assigned role. The historian must resort to hypotheses in the search to penetrate the documentary silence. Nothing matches the detailed correspondence between Plancus and Cicero in 44–43. There is no proof as to where Plancus was or what he was doing for several years after his return to Rome in 32, but then with no explanation two sources name him as moving the *sententia* whereby the Senate conferred the

cognomen Augustus on Octavian in January 27. This sudden emergence demands explanation. Having spoken, he then drops from view for five more years and reappears in 22 as censor. As before, his emergence is unexplained, but the censorship was intended to be another demonstration of the *res publica restituta*. A combination of factors, including an unspecified disagreement with his colleague, prevented fulfillment of the censorial duties. The censorship is customarily dismissed as a humiliation, but it cannot have been a total disaster or Plancus would not have included it among the *honores* in his *elogium*.⁶ His third contribution was to the Augustan program of building and repairing temples to re-establish the *pax deorum*, as he completed the Temple of Saturn in the Forum, also commemorated in the epitaph on the mausoleum at Caieta.

This monumental tomb dates to the 20s, but it was a private project, not to be considered on a par with his official participation in the Principate. It is, however, part of that participation, as it is similar to the closely contemporary, but much larger one, of Augustus in Rome. Cylindrical mausolea were then in fashion, but he was not merely following a style; he wanted observers to recognize that here was entombed an associate of the emperor. Plancus is not surely attested after 22 and may have died soon thereafter or withdrawn from politics into a leisured retirement at Tibur. Alternatively, he accompanied the youthful Tiberius on a diplomatic mission to the east in 20, in which case his death falls some time thereafter. Since his epitaph boasts he triumphed *ex Raetis* and Roman armies only conquered the Raetian homeland in 15, Plancus may have still been alive at that date and worded his *cursus honorum* to claim a victory in a region Rome only conquered some thirty years after his own campaign.⁷ In this case he will have been at least seventy when he died.

Some inferences are safe. While Octavian doubtless remembered the friction-laden initial contacts between himself and Plancus in 43–40 and was presumably aware of the recent polemics against him – the accusations of treachery in 44–43, of servility and immorality at Cleopatra’s court – he was willing to overlook the former and did not accept the latter as true or dismissed them as inconsequential.⁸ Octavian and his circle of advisors prepared carefully and controlled the agenda during the momentous and transformative sessions of the Senate on January 13 and 16, 27: they scripted the flow of events and left nothing to chance, though we cannot ascertain how many senators had advance knowledge of the program. Plancus’ role as proposer of the *sententia* conferring “Augustus” was part of the script. He was not brought out of obscurity and given this prominent assignment, like a forgotten manuscript discovered in dusty archives and cited for authority. The motion may have been a surprise to those not “in the know,” but he did not propose “Augustus” on his own, and he did not catch Octavian and his

councilors by surprise.

The hypothesis presented here is that Plancus was in the forefront of a program which in the opening years of the Principate sought to adapt Ciceronian political thought, particularly that in the *de Re Publica* relating to the role of the *gubernator* or *rector rei publicae*, to the emerging new order. The theory of Ciceronian influence is an old one. My suggestion that Plancus was a chief advocate of the application of Cicero's thought is new. How much credit should be assigned to him and how much to others is unknowable, because a small coterie of influential politicians formulated the policy in secret. His advocacy explains why he was put forward to propose "Augustus" on January 16, 27. This was not a charade designed to fool public opinion but a serious effort to reform and reorganize the *res publica* to meet the needs of the *imperium* it had become, all the while devising a position which would enable Octavian to retain overall direction.⁹

The attempt to model the *princeps* on the *gubernator* of the *de Re Publica* failed after a few years and in 23 was abandoned as Augustus moved toward a more openly monarchical position. Plancus' retention of high status in that year in spite of the failure of the original policy is reflected in the decision that he should be censor the following year and perhaps in an Horatian ode (3.14). All this is admittedly speculative and incapable of proof. Cicero's thought was generally familiar, and Octavian may not have required guidance from Plancus to have thought of its possible adaptability to his own purposes. Cicero was certainly not the only influence on Octavian-become-Augustus. His influence can be traced, and I suggest that Plancus with his old ties to Cicero, seniority, and persuasiveness was the (or *a*) vehicle for the transference of that influence.

The *Res Gestae* provides much useful information but simultaneously presents problems. In this autobiographical overview of his long public career, written when he was seventy-five and posted on pillars beside the doors of his mausoleum in Rome, the emperor described how he wished posterity to view his actions in moving away from the civil wars to the new age. Section 34 is worth quoting in full.¹⁰

In my sixth and seventh consulships [28–27 BC], after I had put an end to civil wars, although by everyone's agreement I had power over everything, I transferred the state from my power into the control of the Roman senate and people.

{2} for this service, I was named Augustus by senatorial decree, and the doorposts of my house were publicly clothed with laurels, and a civic crown was fastened above my doorway, and a golden shield was set up in the Julian senate house; through an inscription on this shield the fact was declared that the Roman senate and people were giving it to me because of

my valour, clemency, justice and piety.

{3} After this time I excelled everyone in influence, but I had no more power than the others who were my colleagues in each magistracy.

As throughout the *Res Gestae*, its author neither lies nor tells the whole truth. The text is replete with first-person pronouns and gives no credit to anyone else; neither does it name enemies. Agrippa appears as his colleague on two occasions, and members of his family are cited in relation to the emperor, but otherwise the only names are of consuls whose terms indicate dates. As part of this policy, he does not say that Plancus made the motion that preceded the senatorial grant of “Augustus.” Similarly, he omits the censorship of 22. Plancus smoothly and dutifully took a similar approach: his drum-shaped mausoleum at Caieta defers in size to that of Augustus at Rome and his epitaph (his *res gestae*, modest in comparison with the *princeps*’) tactfully avoids encroachment on the princeps’ monopoly of glory by being only one-third the size of Augustus’ and omitted his role as proposing “Augustus.” He did, however, retain a reference to his censorship and construction of the Temple of Saturn.

First measures after the conclusion of the civil wars, 29–28

While still in Alexandria, Octavian granted a consulship in 30 to Cicero’s son – a gesture of reconciliation toward the martyr of the old state, great orator, and political thinker, enhanced by the younger Cicero’s opportunity to announce the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra. At an unknown date Octavian is said to have praised the patriotism of Cicero *pater*.¹¹

On August 13–15, 29, shortly after his return to Rome, Octavian celebrated a grandiose triple triumph commemorating his victories over pirates and brigands, the Illyrians, and Cleopatra (thus maintaining the fiction that these were foreign, not civil, wars; Sextus Pompey and Antony are not mentioned). With much fanfare he closed the doors to the Temple of Janus, again marking an end to warfare and the return of peace. This action makes a neat contrast with the triple triumph, as the two-faced Janus looked forward as well as backward. Shutting the temple doors was an act of transition and symbolism. Livy originally intended to end his enormous *Ab Urbe Condita* with the triumph, so he, too, saw it as a finale. The next year he dedicated the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, vowed in 36. He completed two projects commemorating his rise to power: the temple of the Deified Julius and, adjacent to it, the triumphal arch celebrating the victory at Actium.

More constructive than gestures looking to the past are the cautious steps he took toward the future, inching forward, reflecting on what policies to avoid and thinking carefully about which to pursue. Extensive demobilization of the enormous armies of the civil war was both good politics and a way of cutting government expenditures. He shunned kingship and sought gradually to revive as much of the traditional state as he could, thus appearing respectable and “republican.” In short, he distanced himself from the arrogance of Caesar and his own triumviral past.¹² But his continual consulships from 31 and ability to rule through decrees obviously scorned the *mos maiorum* and were points around which opposition could gather. Octavian and those around him gave much attention to what changes should be instituted in the government and in particular what his own position should be.¹³ He could not be certain that the civil wars were truly at an end¹⁴ and did not possess any master plan for a new order.

Men who had participated in the civil wars will have compared all this with Caesar in 46–44. No one was better placed than Plancus, assumed to have been with Octavian in the east in 32–29 and thereafter in Italy. He may have settled veterans at Beneventum if he had not already done so in 42–41. Plancus’ boast of his action in his epitaph might indicate his participation in the program of demobilization and colonization, but if so here, too, he did not infringe on the emperor’s glory and left his assistance rather vague: “*agros divisit in Italia Beneventi*.”¹⁵

As noted earlier, years later Augustus chose to regard his sixth and seventh consulships (28 and 27) together as the crucial time of transition in his career. Because so little is recorded of 28, the consequence has been an overemphasis on the events of January 27. Livy’s history for this period is lost, and other sources are inadequate replacements. Cassius Dio skimmed over 28. Book 53 opens with a brief transition from the “debate” between Agrippa and Maecenas (book 52) to the “settlement” of 27.¹⁶ Suetonius remarked that Octavian twice thought about “restoring the *res publica*,” the first time immediately after the defeat of Antony, the second in 23. Velleius composed a rather confused summary of these years, the essence of which is that “the primitive and ancient form of the state was recalled.” Somewhat later and out of chronological order, he mentioned Plancus’ *sententia*.¹⁷

The little that is known of 28 points to the year’s importance. Octavian and Agrippa spent their entire consulships in Rome, a convincing sign of returning peace. In private, Octavian and his councilors deliberated the future shape of the state. He evidently attempted a moral reform program but withdrew it when he encountered strong opposition.¹⁸ He and Agrippa employed their consular powers to conduct a census, the first since 69. It included a *lectio* (review) of the Senate, in the course of which he was named

princeps senatus. His generous infusion of funds restored solvency to the state treasury. He distributed grain to the people and money to impoverished senators and canceled most outstanding debts. By decree, all illegal and unjust deeds and rulings of the triumviral period were made to expire at the end of 28, and at some point in the next year he restored the old electoral procedure.¹⁹ The college of *epulones* may have had charge of the games celebrating Actium.²⁰ As an *epulo* Plancus would have had some official role, but nothing is specified.

Octavian also began a program which ran for many years, the rebuilding of Rome's many dilapidated temples (he claimed 82) and the construction of magnificent temples and public buildings.²¹ The temple of Apollo Palatinus was completed in 28 and is a convenient marker for the commencement of a building program which transformed the city, a program to which he recruited many leading men to contribute. The northern half of the forum must have been a massive construction site for years: a new *curia* and rostra, the grand basilicas Julia and Aemilia, the temple to Divus Julius, and the Actium arch. To this assemblage of projects we must add Plancus' Temple of Saturn. Suetonius names Plancus as one of the leading men (*principes viri*) whose participation Augustus solicited.²² He keeps select company: Marcius Philippus (cos. 38),²³ Cornificius (cos. 35), Asinius Pollio (cos. 40), Cornelius Balbus (nephew of Caesar's agent), and the military men Statilius Taurus (cos. 37, 26) and Agrippa (cos. 37, 28, 27). Completion of the Temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum of Augustus in 2 BC marks the program's duration.

As Plancus reports in his epitaph, "*aedem Saturni fecit de manibiis*."²⁴ Utilizing the spoils from his recent Raetian campaign, he had likely begun this elaborate and expensive project during his consulship of 42. Plancus' absence from Rome through the 30s probably entailed a hiatus in the work, and completion thus falls in the 20s.²⁵ We do not know why Plancus selected this particular temple. The work needed to be done, as the previous temple had burned in 50 and the Temple of Saturn was the state treasury (*aerarium*) and repository for bullion and many records.²⁶ It stood in the heart of the Forum, utilitarian and ornamental, a companion piece to the rebuilt Senate house, rostra, two basilicas, Temple of the Deified Julius, and arch of Augustus.²⁷ Only the substructure and bits of the decorative elements of Plancus' temple survive, but the high quality of their craftsmanship is clearly part of the Augustan beautification of Rome.

A restored emphasis on the ancient cult of Saturn harmonizes with the theme of the Golden Age which the god had once established in his own land, for Italy is *Saturnia tellus*. In the *Georgics* Vergil described the features of the Age of Saturn.²⁸ Plancus' contribution of a new temple for this ancient Italian god on the site of Hercules' altar was of great symbolic importance, a

companion piece to that of Apollo on the Palatine as well as the structures in the Forum. It associated the original Age of Saturn with the dawning Golden Age of Apollo.²⁹ The Augustan religious reforms were not simply a matter of political propaganda, for there was a groundswell of conservatism at the time which most scholars feel Augustus shared. For many, it may have been sentimental patriotism; for all, the ensuing political glory was well worth the investment.³⁰

Octavian becomes Augustus, 27

Transfer of the government from his *potestas* ([personal and arbitrary] power) to the *arbitrium* (judgment, discretion) of the Senate and people of Rome was a lengthy process, not a single act, and culminated in the grant of “Augustus,” the laurel leaves on his doorposts, the *corona civica* for saving the lives of citizens, and the *clupeus virtutis* naming his primary qualities. From this time onward, he had more *auctoritas* than anyone else but his *potestas* was equal to that of his magisterial colleagues. By implication but not admission, prior to this time he had governed by extraordinary and irregular means, *dominatio*, a characteristic of the warlords of those chaotic years which he wanted to relegate permanently to the past. He sought acceptance and respectability by appealing to Roman tradition; he would be old-fashioned, not a dictator (Antony abolished the office in 44) or king.

The modification of Octavian’s status in January 27 is often taken as the initiation of the empire.³¹ An idealized and manipulated perception of the past and the emotional Roman admiration of the *mos maiorum* as well as political demands guided the participants. Octavian was personally traditional in many respects, and his intention to forge a position that appeared to depart only minimally from the traditional institutions of the *res publica* may well have been sincere. He and his collaborators made great efforts to mask what was in fact a new regime as a resumption of the ancestral state after the awful intervening period Tacitus later characterized as “*non mos, non ius*.”³² Fifteen years later and with a similar purpose, the artists of the Ara Pacis intended the current and later generations to realize that the imperial family continued a sacrificial procession which had begun in the time of Aeneas and would endure into the indefinite future.

A few days into his seventh consulship, once again shared with Agrippa, Octavian convened the Senate and continued the transferal of the *res publica* from his *potestas* to the *arbitrium* of the Senate and Roman people. Unlike his acts of closure in 29–28 which looked backward as they ended the years of irregular rule and civil war, he now looked forward to something new. The

whole process can fairly be termed *rei publicae restitutio*, even if no contemporary evidence employs the term. Romans had a clear sense of *res publica*: the proper functioning of citizen assemblies and law courts, personal freedom for citizens and the right to maintain one's *dignitas*, domestic peace (foreign wars were a different matter), and economic opportunity. All concepts centered on stability and the traditional forms and mechanisms of a government which the Senate dominated. This was the *libertas* of Rome. Senators had greater *dignitas* than anyone else. A few illustrious senators, the *principes*, might enjoy greater *auctoritas* and *dignitas* than others, but no one senator, no matter how outstanding his deeds or family, should have mastery over the state. By its very definition the *res publica* could not become the *res unius*, property of a single individual. Caesar's failure to realize the vitality of this principle goes far to explain his fate.

Octavian's determination to conform to this idea runs through his actions in the 20s. He had already ostentatiously proclaimed an end to the civil wars. His next and greater task was to terminate his personal domination of the state while simultaneously creating a position of permanent preeminence for himself which Rome's governing classes would accept. It was a delicate task and required tact, good will, and even a bit of hypocrisy and willingness not to examine too closely on the part of all concerned. The events of 27 have been endlessly discussed and analyzed, but the one point on which there is agreement is that nothing was left to chance. Octavian, his close advisors, and an uncertain number of select senators made careful plans, and as presiding consul Octavian made sure that everybody adhered to the script.³³

On January 13, 27, Octavian delivered a speech in the Senate (we have only a paraphrase) in which he announced his intention to resign his enormous powers and return them to the Senate. The years of irregularity were over, and he was reestablishing the traditional senatorial procedures of the *res publica*. On the surface at least, this was an act of exemplary patriotism, as he appeared to be voluntarily giving up the extraordinary powers he had held. It was conspicuously what Caesar in 46–44 had not done, a demonstration of his determination not to be seen as another Caesar,³⁴ and as such it may have owed something to Cicero's appeals to Caesar in the *pro Marcello* to restore the ancient institutions. Instead of grasping for fresh powers or encouraging a subservient Senate to offer him more and more, he was apparently willing to give up some of those which he had been holding. The *res publica* was not dead or a shadow without substance: Octavian was affirming that he was resuscitating it. Whereas rumor held that Caesar had insulted the Senate by failing to rise when a delegation of senators came to confer a collection of honors they had just voted him, Octavian carefully worked with and through the Senate, appearing to be no more than a consul and senator. There was to be

no repetition of the Lupercalia of February 44. His speech on January 13 is analogous to a modern inaugural address. Or one might compare it with the coronation charter of Henry I of England in 1100, when the new king promised not to repeat the unpopular policies of his unlamented brother William II Rufus, the victim of a “hunting accident” in the New Forest.

Playing the role expected of it, the Senate responded by conferring three prestigious but traditional honors on him: an oak crown for saving citizens’ lives (alluding to sparing rather than proscribing the defeated), laurel boughs for the doorposts of his house, and a gold shield to be hung in the Senate house listing his outstanding qualities: *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas*.³⁵ Of more practical value, it offered Octavian the government of all provinces, which included command of the various armies. The Senate had customarily granted military commands, so this offer conformed to tradition; but it also continued the efforts to correct the irregularities of the triumviral years, which everybody wanted to push out of sight.³⁶ Motions must have preceded these decisions, but no sponsors are on record.

On January 16 the Senate reconvened. Proceedings refined events of January 13, in that a first proposal was replaced by a better one, a more decisive shift from absolutism toward traditional rule. The Senate entreated him to keep the extensive powers he had employed since 43, but he rejected them and, displaying a proper show of reluctance and sense of duty to accede to the *patres*’ desires, announced that he would accept only Spain, Gaul, and Syria and ceded the rest to the Senate. The patriotic gesture of the *recusatio* resulted in an enhancement of his standing, as these provinces housed the great majority of the army. Offer and acceptance replaced seizure. The other major item on the agenda was deliberation as to how he should be referred to and addressed: a new *cognomen* was needed to fit his unprecedented standing.³⁷ After some discussion over at least one alternative, “Romulus,” Plancus proposed “Augustus” and the Senate duly accepted it. Focus on the proposer, not the recipient, yields a different sense of the genesis of the Principate. Scholarly concentration on constitutional issues and the recipient have skipped over or minimized the role of Plancus.³⁸

The question one must answer is: “Why was Plancus chosen?” Seniority was doubtless one point in his favor, and oratorical skill another, but even taken together these are insufficient. He was not a honey-tongued press officer releasing a statement to the media. The conferral of “Augustus” was the culmination of this staged ceremony which marked the restoration of traditional, ordered government. Octavian did not give this key role to a disreputable nonentity who would have discredited the whole project. Plancus must have been picked as the speaker well in advance of the big day. Is it possible to determine the factors which preceded his selection and, even more,

his role, if any, in the choice of “Augustus”?

Assuming Plancus was a member of Octavian’s circle of advisors, his oration embodied a substantial body of opinion. Can we venture a further step? Might “Augustus” have been his idea and he primarily responsible for convincing Octavian in the preceding private deliberations of its suitability? Plancus’ years with Caesar and Antony certainly taught him the destructive power of negative images. My proposal cannot be proved, only suggested. Octavian could have come up with the name himself: nobody in Rome was more aware of the power of propaganda and images than he was. There is no way to know how Octavian and his councilors arrived at the decision.

Unfortunately, we have little more than the bald statement that Plancus made the motion, not the full speech which would have provided at some length the reasoning behind the *sententia*. Surely there was a fine oration in Livy, perhaps close to the original available in the Senate’s archives. Suetonius is the fullest account, and he evidently had access to the original text. He reports it this way in *Augustus* 7.2: “*Augusti cognomen assumpsit ... Munati Planci sententia, cum quibus censentibus Romulum appellari oportere quasi et ipsum conditorem urbis, praevaluisset, ut Augustus potius vocaretur.*” [He assumed the cognomen Augustus on the motion of Munatius Plancus, whose argument prevailed that although some felt he ought to be called Romulus as he was another founder of the city.] Plancus’ reasons were “*non tantum novo sed etiam ampliore cognomine, quod loca quoque religiosa et in quibus augurato quid consecrato augusta dicantur, ab auctu vel ab avium gestu gustave sicut Ennius docet scribens, ‘Augusto augurio postquam incluta condita Roma est.’*” [{Augustus} was not only a new and more comprehensive cognomen, because religious places and those which had been sanctified by augury are called ‘augustan’; but also from the activity and pecking of birds, as Ennius teaches when he wrote ‘after famous Rome was founded with august augury.’] Velleius is skimpy (2.91.1): “*quod cognomen illi iure Planci sententia consensus universi senatus populiue Romani indidit.*”³⁹ [Which cognomen the motion of Plancus rightly [or by law] conferred upon him with the unanimous consent of the Senate and Roman people.] Had Tacitus written his promised account of the Augustan regime, he might have provided a version close to the original, as he did with Claudius’ speech on the Gallic senators in AD 48.

Who would have been a more fitting speaker than Plancus? Agrippa and Statilius Taurus were too obviously Octavian’s partisans to make a realistic proposal. Valerius Messala’s *dignitas* as a patrician and his oratorical talents might have made him a logical choice to move the motion, but he was in Gaul at the time and an elder statesman would surely have been a more fitting speaker: Messala was only thirty-eight, just a year or two older than Octavian. Close to the same age was Paullus Aemilius Lepidus, also a patrician and

nephew of the deposed triumvir; made suffect consul in 34 by Octavian, he was related to Octavian by marriage: his wife Cornelia was daughter of Octavian's divorced first wife Scribonia and thus Octavian's stepdaughter.⁴⁰ Plancus' seniority enhanced his eligibility: age mattered at Rome.⁴¹ In spite of the senatorial purge in 28, many senators were too young and triumphal appointees to be given such a significant role on this momentous occasion.

Everything had been carefully prepared in advance: the proceedings were not spontaneous, though it does appear that most senators did not know what was about to happen.⁴² As presiding consul, Octavian controlled the agenda and the order in which senators were called on to speak. He was not surprised at either the mover or the motion. Plancus did not speak first, though he was a senior consular. A "debate" of sorts preceded him, as Suetonius notes that previous speakers and Octavian himself had been of the opinion that he should be known as Romulus and thus be linked to the founder of the city. This statement has attracted substantial analysis.⁴³ Plancus' oration appears to have been so convincing that the senators immediately recognized that "Augustus" was far preferable to "Romulus" and proceeded to pass the motion unanimously.

Three observations are in order. First, "Romulus" was probably never a serious contender in spite of Octavian's initial inclination and advanced only to be openly rejected. The legendary figure had murdered his brother, was a king, had organized the rape of the Sabine women, had perhaps been murdered by senators, and then had been declared divine under the name Quirinus. The quasi-legendary Camillus had been the second Romulus and then Marius had been the third when he appropriated an association with Rome's founder for saving Italy from the Germanic invaders, but he had then spoiled the identification by seizing the state in a civil war and initiating a fearful proscription.⁴⁴ Marius was Caesar's uncle, who was in turn Octavian's great-uncle. At a time when Octavian was distancing himself from Caesar, he did not want to recall a tie with a Caesarian forebear and earlier strife. By appearing to be persuaded not to be yet another Romulus, Octavian once again exhibited the reasonableness and flexibility that was proper to a senator.

Second, when Plancus rose to speak, many senators, aware that he was in the inner circle, must have immediately realized that his proposal was not another possible candidate brought up for discussion but came with the approval of Octavian and his advisors. Further debate was pointless; any senators not inclined to accept Plancus' *sententia* stayed quiet. Persuasion being unnecessary, the prompt vote was unanimous. "Augustus" was thoroughly acceptable and possessed venerable literary and religious overtones. Ennius – dead for nearly a century and a half but still Rome's great national poet, as Vergil was in the early stages of composing the *Aeneid* – had

written that Rome was founded with “august augury.”

Third, we can never be certain who came up with “Augustus” as the new *cognomen*, and it may have been a consensus choice which emerged after considerable discussion among Octavian’s advisors, not the idea of a single individual. Plancus’ contribution may have been to stress the applicability of the proposal to Cicero’s theories: the advice extended in the theoretical *de Re Publica* written in the late 50s and also the appeals to Caesar for reform in the *pro Marcello* of 46 were applicable two decades and more later.⁴⁵ Perhaps he recalled the lines from Ennius that Rome was founded with “august augury.” It was a stroke of genius, as the word had only positive and religious overtones, no negatives. It had never been used of a human, but it had been applied to sacred places and carried connotations of divinity – but yet did not actually confer divine status. “Augustus” was new, and having no human precedents it became one. If “Augustus” was in fact Plancus’ idea, or if he was only its leading advocate, we have the reason why he was chosen to make the formal *sententia* in the session of the Senate on January 16.⁴⁶

“Augustus” was attractively adaptable and firmly Roman, with its flexibility its strength. It moved Octavian away from his old self – the ruthless, proscribing triumvir – toward the image of the famous Prima Porta statue carved only a few years later. It implied a loose association with the founding of Rome and divinity and thus permitted any who wished to regard the *princeps* as another Romulus. It elevated him and vaguely alluded to *divi filius* but did not blatantly recall Caesar. Rather than confer a vast *imperium* as the *leges Gabinia*, *Manilia*, *Vatinia*, and *Titia* had done in 67, 66, 59, and 43, the *sententia Planci* bestowed a *cognomen* which recognized past achievements and looked forward to more. It led away from rule by *potentia* toward guidance by *auctoritas*, the quality of a statesman.⁴⁷ It left him a citizen, but an elevated one, and anticipated deification. “Romulus” was narrowly Roman, but “Augustus” was broadly Italian and thus harmonious with the *tota Italia* which had demanded him as *dux* in the holy war against Antony and Cleopatra and whom Vergil was shortly to compare with Aeneas.

Another point may be worth brief consideration: as an unprecedented term, “Augustus” would appeal to the inhabitants of the provinces by departing from narrowly Roman/Latin titles. In the emerging imperial cult in Asia and Bithynia, where in 29 Octavian had proposed slightly differing terms and practices for the Roman citizens and provincials, everybody could use the new term. Hence “Augustus” and its Greek equivalent *Sebastos* appear frequently and interchangeably. Citizens could use it without regarding it as direct worship; provincials could see it as implying his divinity, more comprehensible than worship of his *genius*.

Like many from outside the narrow elite of the old aristocracy, Plancus may

have felt a loyalty to the ancient Roman institutions and been disappointed in Caesar's neglect of Rome's traditions and his tendency toward monarchy. Octavian's conservative outlook on life is well known and is in contrast with the readiness of Caesar to flaunt conventional values. What to some appeared to be flattery may rather reflect that he and the new *princeps* were in agreement.⁴⁸

Augustus never admitted a debt to Ciceronian political theory, one aspect of his general policy not to admit owing anything to anybody: it is impossible to be certain that Cicero provided some of the intellectual foundation of the new state. This has long been a debated topic.⁴⁹ Many deny Ciceronian influence,⁵⁰ and others regard it possible but unprovable.⁵¹ The claim in *Res Gestae* 34 that after 27 he had only as much *potestas* as his magisterial colleagues but excelled them in *auctoritas*, no more than a half-truth, can be seen as an allusion to the Ciceronian *moderator* of the *de Re Publica*. The *Res Gestae* as a greatly expanded eulogy is the sort of document which by definition relates to the deeds of only the deceased (though it was composed before his death). Augustus may have taken advantage of the general familiarity with Ciceronian political theory among the senatorial aristocracy and expected that others would recognize and approve. Acceptance could well be only a polite allusion to gain respectability, not substantial influence.

If the text of Plancus' *sententia* in 27 had survived, we might be able to infer his theoretical motivation and advance the theory of his authorship with reasonable confidence. Beyond his long-standing ties with Cicero and general prominence in the 20s, all is inference, as whatever influence he possessed he wielded behind the closed doors in the circle of advisors which later became the *consilium principis*. Seneca dubbed Plancus "the greatest flatterer before Vitellius," and the influence of L. Vitellius in the courts of Caligula and Claudius is undoubted.⁵² A thin line separates flattery from guidance, and much depends on the judge's perspective of the influencer and the influenced. Seneca himself could fairly be charged with flattery. Augustus certainly wanted to appear respectably "republican" – he was personally conservative and traditional, and it was sound policy to break with Caesar – and if he and his advisors gave any thought to a theoretical basis for his standing, they would have relied on Cicero.

Let us now turn to see what aspects of the *de Re Publica* of 51, addressed to a general readership, and then the *pro Marcello* of 46, delivered in Caesar's presence, are perhaps relevant to the foundation of the Augustan Principate. In the former work, Cicero argued that the mixed government of the Roman state of the second century was the best state ever devised. This was a time of great *libertas* for the senatorial aristocracy, unlike the years after 60 when triumvirs and dynasts controlled affairs. The very fact that Cicero looked back to and

glamorized this era appealed to Augustus, as it enabled him to skip over the ugliness of more recent times to which he had contributed not a little. In one passage Laelius calls on Scipio Aemilianus (d. 129) to describe the *optimus status civitatis*, the best form of government, and Scipio proceeds to describe the Roman state of his day.⁵³ Augustus desired to be the *auctor optimi status* and claimed to have restored the state from his *potestas* to the *arbitrium* of SPQR. Cicero stressed that the Roman state rested on the customs and achievements of ancient heroes, and he quoted the lines of Ennius, “*moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque*.” Plancus referred to another Ennian passage when proposing “Augustus.” The new ruler wanted to resuscitate old-fashioned patriotism and make ancestral customs the foundation of the new Golden Age.⁵⁴

More than anyone else, Cicero was responsible for introducing the theoretical goodness of one-man rule on the analogy that the soul governs the unruly passions in a regal way. With Scipio as his mouthpiece, he argued that Rome’s kings were good men: Romulus was the ideal founder, the prime example of a man who achieved deification through great deeds. Bad kings such as Tarquinius Superbus spoiled the institution.⁵⁵ Roman dislike of kingship is well known, as is Octavian/Augustus’s studied avoidance of *rex* and *dictator*. Cicero was selective in his handling of the Romulus legends, and he wrote in the late 50s before Caesar’s association with Romulus/Quirinus spoiled the image. Octavian may have owed his initial desire to be known as a second Romulus to Cicero’s glorification of him. Books 5 and 6 of the *de Re Publica* seem to have given prominence to the regal element in developing the role of the *gubernator*, *moderator*, and *rector rei publicae*. The bad condition of the text makes it impossible to speak with certainty.

Cicero’s hero was the kingly or regal man, who lacks a formal office and remains a *civis* subject to the laws but who is preeminent in *virtus*, *auctoritas*, and *prudentia* through which he guides the state without seeking personal power and dominion. Such a person is a *vir bonus*, the *optimus civis*, the *princeps*. His qualities allow him to be an – even the – *auctor consilii publici*.⁵⁶

Cicero presented Scipio Aemilianus as the exemplar, the ideal *rector* of the ideal *res publica*, and in the *Somnium Scipionis* (occupying most of book 6 of the *de Re Publica*) pictured him drawing inspiration from his father L. Aemilius Paullus and grandfather the elder Scipio Africanus. This enabled Cicero to look back in time two more generations to the late third and early second century, away from earth and toward heaven, for the *rector* gains immortal life by his deeds. Aemilianus was a thoroughly respectable national hero and a suitable model, for he had led the state through *auctoritas*, worked within the traditional “mixed” government and overcame senatorial political opponents (notably Appius Claudius Pulcher), scorned the demagoguery of

Tiberius Gracchus, and in the *Somnium Scipionis* achieved eternal life at death.⁵⁷ Plancus may not have been thinking of eventual deification for Octavian in 27, but the conferral of “Pater Patriae” on Augustus in 2 BC guaranteed it.

Interestingly, Velleius refers to Agrippa as a second Laelius,⁵⁸ perhaps not a very accurate parallel in one sense, since the bluff Agrippa was a military man and Laelius was dubbed “Sapiens” for his wisdom. But the friendship between Agrippa and Augustus is compatible with the pairing of Laelius with Scipio. And since in the *de Re Publica* Scipio speaks favorably of Romulus, Augustus was able to keep the more desirable aspects of the legendary founder while avoiding those which were pejorative. Association with Aemilianus also helped put distance between Augustus and Caesar. In the early 20s Augustus was to rid himself of the image of a bloodthirsty *vir militaris* and dynast, to bury his “Octavian phase” in oblivion.⁵⁹ He needed another image to replace it, however, as he could not simply expect people to forget Caesar.

This need not mean that Augustus intended fully to restore in its entirety the old form of government, to set back the clock to the days of Aemilianus. Restoration meant the rehabilitation of the traditional institutions and the rejection of *dominatio*. He could be flexible and take advantage of the deep emotional attachment to traditional forms. In the absence of a written constitution he could repair and revitalize certain magistracies and priesthoods, but did not need to restore all of them to their full ancient pristine condition. Appearances mattered as much as functional reality. The ruling classes were not deceived about the nature of the “restored” *res publica*, nor were they intended to be. Augustus was not being devious. The goal of the imperial advisors was to formulate a palatable and workable government and to win the voluntary cooperation of the senators. Without the senators there could be no restoration. They and Augustus were too practical to be bound by political theory. They made use of elements of Romulus, of Scipio Aemilianus, and of the Ciceronian ideal and spirit.

Augustus’ position was far more formalized than anything Cicero had envisioned in the *de Re Publica*, for it was established through the Senate. In the traditional state it had been unthinkable that senators would ever recognize one of their own as permanently dominant: Augustus was well beyond the old *princeps senatus*, though he was that as well. But his claim to have restored the traditional state after a time of troubles was precisely what a *rector* was expected to do. A *rector* used his *auctoritas* through the normal organs of the state, whereas a dynast employed *potestas* or *potentia* and commanded underlings. Augustus would be another Scipio Aemilianus, leading a revitalized *consensus omnium bonorum*, not one of the *viri militares* or *potentes*.

The elaborate “republicanism” and advocacy of the *mos maiorum* were designed precisely to win over those elements of the citizen body who were most attached to the ancient forms, men whose “republicanism” was sentimental and antiquarian.⁶⁰ He sought justification for his position by appealing to Roman traditions, much as Cicero couched his theory of the *de Re Publica* in history.⁶¹

When Cicero delivered the *pro Marcello* in 46, Rome was a different world from when he composed *de Re Publica* a few years previously. The civil war from 49 fundamentally changed the conditions of political life, as now Caesar’s domination was all but guaranteed. Only the most committed die-hards had refused to accept the results of the battlefields, and their cause would suffer a crushing defeat at Munda in 45. No more dreams of ideal statesmen guiding the state through personal prestige (*auctoritas*) and achieving eternal life with the immortal gods through their achievements. Just restored to civil life after months of confinement at Brundisium by Antony, Cicero had to alter his tactics, but he still hoped to influence the course of events. He knew Caesar well and respected his intellect but never trusted his politics or ultimate intentions. So when Cicero spoke on behalf of bringing home Marcellus from exile, he used the occasion to gently nudge the dictator toward needed reforms which would stabilize the tottering state.

In the speech Cicero avoided specific recommendations for reform, as he did not know what the dictator had in mind and was naturally afraid to offend. Reforms were a delicate topic when Caesar was listening to the oration. Cicero urged the victorious Caesar to surpass the glories of his military campaigns and, above all, to stay in power to supervise the extensive reconstruction of the institutions of the state that was desperately needed. In doing so Caesar would win far greater, even eternal, fame: this passage recalls the eternal glory and heavenly reward of the statesman in the *Somnium Scipionis*. In Velleius’ summary, there was nothing unacceptable to traditional-minded Republicans in Caesar’s achievements: civil and foreign wars concluded, peace restored, force (*vis*) returned to the laws – emended or augmented as need arose – and authority (*auctoritas*) to the Senate, the magistrates’ *imperium* reduced to its previous limits, agriculture revived, the old religion restored, possession of property guaranteed.⁶²

Nothing came of these modest proposals at the time, nor do we know what Caesar thought of them. After the victory at Munda in 45 Caesar’s autocracy led Cicero to abandon political life, and after Caesar’s return to Rome in mid-year he did not have time to launch a comprehensive program of reform before he was assassinated. Cicero’s thoughts were shelved, probably largely forgotten. Plancus later found them useful as points of discussion in the closed sessions of Octavian’s *consilium* as its members debated the proper course of

action in late 28 and early 27. Their very vagueness made them adaptable to the new situation. The advisors could all agree that Octavian should stay in power, perhaps using the fear of continuing unrest as justification, and Cicero's other proposals were acceptably modest suggestions moving in the right direction. Octavian-become-Augustus could thereby excel Romulus and Caesar both: he would become the example for all others to emulate.⁶³

Within a few years the attempt to pattern Augustus' position after the Ciceronian *rector* was found inadequate and quietly abandoned. Sailing in uncharted waters over the immense seas toward an unknown port – as Teucer in Horace's recently written ode – Augustus maneuvered cautiously. He knew how to avoid the rocks that had sunk Caesar, but not how to locate the safe channels. It is not surprising that he several times changed course. What in 28–27 he thought might work, he discarded in 23 when circumstances called for modifications.⁶⁴

Troubles in 24–23

Soon after the governmental reforms of January, 27, the *princeps* left Italy for an extended stay in the western provinces newly entrusted to him. He went first to Gaul where, in the absence of specific information as to his actions we can posit a general inspection and revision of the provincial administration. He may well have set up his base at Plancus' centrally located colony of Lugdunum, which perhaps now lost its original name of Munatia Felix. He then moved on to the Iberian peninsula, where he supervised campaigns designed to subdue the stubborn residents of the northwestern portion of Tarraconensis. In any event he fell sick and retired to the provincial capital of Tarraco, where he slowly regained sufficient health to permit him to return to Italy late in 24 or early in 23. Agrippa and his legates finally completed the conquest in 19.

The period between Augustus' return from Spain in 24 and his departure to the east in 21 was tense, but the absence of a reliable chronology and suitably full information causes much to remain obscure. Of direct relevance to us, nothing is known of Plancus' whereabouts or activities for five years, from early 27 to the opening of 22, so the extent of his participation in high politics and crises can only be conjectured.

Although in 27 Augustus had made it clear that he would not seek any royal titles, his subsequent actions were widely perceived as moving toward, not away from, monarchical control and dynasticism. The consecutive consulships were offensive, all the more for being held *in absentia* from his departure to Gaul and Spain in 27. By 23 he was in his eleventh, well past the previous

record, Marius' seven. By holding the office repeatedly, he was depriving senators of what most regarded as their prerogative. In obvious signs of dynasticism, in 25 his nephew Marcellus became his son-in-law by marrying Julia; both Marcellus and the emperor's stepson Tiberius received the privileges of a stepped-up career.⁶⁵ To make matters worse, early in 23 Augustus' health again collapsed. Many expected his death; proof of his condition is that he gave his signet ring to Agrippa and an account of the imperial finances and army to his consular colleague Cn. Calpurnius Piso and soon resigned his consulship. Had he died, Plancus might have been called on to deliver the eulogy.⁶⁶ The *princeps* slowly recovered, so Plancus' oratorical talents were not required.

These interconnected events merit analysis as we think about Plancus' career. Cn. Piso is an interesting character, and his sons' marriages are revealing. He had sided with Brutus and Cassius as a young man in 43–42 and had abstained from politics until Augustus persuaded him to replace the deceased Terentius Varro Murena in the consulship of 23. A belated convert to the Augustan state, Piso was a firm adherent thereafter. His elder son Cnaeus was a close friend of Tiberius, consul with him in 7, and married Plancus' granddaughter. (The origins of this marriage may lie in the social circles of the Tiburtine villas of the Pisos and Plancus, though it cannot be dated clearly. Its consequences are traced in the Epilogue.) The younger son, Lucius, was consul in 1 BC and married Statilia, daughter of Statilius Taurus.⁶⁷

Poor health was only one of the troubles confronting Augustus in 23. Political unrest had been brewing during his absence since 27, and a conspiracy proved that the Principate was not universally accepted.⁶⁸ A former governor of Macedonia, M. Primus, caused acute embarrassment when he was brought to trial for having waged war without authorization. He secured as defense counsel L. Licinius Varro Murena – close kin to A. Terentius Varro Murena, who died when consul designate for 23 and whose sister was the wife of Maecenas. Murena planned to summon Augustus to court and exact testimony that he had ordered Primus to conduct the campaigns in question, in an area over which Augustus did not have *imperium*. The *princeps* refused to obey the summons but then showed up unasked “for the public good” and denied having given the orders. The haughty rebuff seemed to put Augustus above the laws and thus contradicted the essence of the restored *res publica* he had been promoting since 28. Murena formed a conspiracy. When it was discovered, the plotters fled, but were caught and killed.

The sequel is revealing. Maecenas, probably at the heart of uncovering the plot, may have briefly lost Augustus' favor, as he is said to have told his wife of her brother's imminent danger, a tip which she passed on before the government made the arrests.⁶⁹ Tiberius conducted a posthumous prosecution

of Murena. His health doubtless still not fully recovered and desirous of regaining public favor, Augustus resigned his consulship and selected as his replacement L. Sestius Quirinalis, whose previous political sentiments were similar to Piso's.⁷⁰ Senators realized that the crisis of 23 compelled them to demonstrate whether they were with Augustus or against him. Those who opted to join him chose well. Some, like Sestius, profited immediately.

Suetonius notes 23 as the second occasion on which Augustus thought about restoring the traditional government ("*de reddenda re p. bis cogitavit*" [Aug. 28]), which ought to mean retiring from public life altogether. Instead, he employed his immense political skills to modify his position and quietly abandoned the previous efforts to establish himself as a Ciceronian *gubernator*. He abdicated the consulship and skillfully co-opted several republican holdouts into cooperation. In 22 the pair of consuls was M. Claudius Marcellus Aeserninus and L. Arruntius, both of whom had avoided politics out of principle for some years.⁷¹ As compensation for his lost powers, however, Augustus received twofold compensation: *tribunicia potestas* and proconsular *imperium*, carefully specified as *maius*, which enabled him to retain command of the armies and intervene in provincial affairs. Because his status was now spelled out in law and far more regularized than previously, the *princeps* was henceforth less in accord with the Ciceronian ideal *gubernator*, though still far from a *rex* or *dictator perpetuus*.

Horace, *Odes* 1.4 (to Sestius, "*Solvitur acris hiems*") and 3.14 ("*Herculis ritu ... Planco consule*")

These two *carmina*, closely contemporary in composition, reflect the poet's aspirations and worries amid the crises of 24–23. Ode 1.4 is dedicated to the consul of 23 and reflects the optimism of spring in the first three stanzas, only to switch abruptly to the pervasive sadness and gloom of the time in its last two. In one sense, this ode is a parallel to the Plancus Ode (1.7), in that both were composed not long after conversions to Augustus' side. Each gains in meaning when read allegorically and applied in general and personal terms. As will appear, however, differences outweigh similarities.

Solvitur acris hiems grata vice veris et Favoni
trahuntque siccas machinae carinas,
ac neque iam stabulis gaudet pecus aut arator igni
nec prata canis albicant pruinis.
Iam Cytherea chorus ducit Venus imminente luna 5
iunctaeque Nymphis Gratiae decentes

alterno terram quatiant pede, dum gravis Cyclopus
Vulcanus ardens visit officinas.

Nunc decet aut viridi nitidum caput impedire myrto
aut flore, terrae quem ferunt solutae; 10
nunc et in umbrosis Fauno decet immolare lucis,
seu poscat agna sive malit haedo.

Pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
regumque turris. O beate Sesti,
vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam. 15
Iam te premet nox fabulaeque Manes
et domus exilis Plutonia; quo simul mearis,
nec regna vini sortiere talis,
nec tenerum Lycidan mirabere, quo calet iuventus
nunc omnis et mox virgines tepebunt. 20

Bitter winter is dissolved and in its pleasing turn comes spring, and the cranes draw the dry ships to the sea; the cow is no longer happy in its stable nor is the plowman by his fire, and the meadows no longer glisten with frost. (5) Now Cyprian Venus leads her chorus beneath the moon above, and the charming Graces joined with the Nymphs beat the earth in alternating rhythm, while ponderous Vulcan glowing with sweat overlooks the Cyclopes' workshops. (9) Now is the time to bind one's gleaming head with bright myrtle or flowers which the earth, set free from winter's hardness, is accustomed to bear. Now it is right to sacrifice to Faunus in the shady groves, whether he demands a lamb or kid.

(13) Pale Death kicks at the homes of the poor and the towers of kings. O fortunate Sestius, the brief peak of life forbids us to enter into long-ranging hope. Already night and the Manes of lore (17) and the shadowy Plutonian home press near you. Wherever you roam, you will not win by the roll of the dice the kingship of wine, nor look upon the young Lycian, when now all youth burns with desire and the maidens are afire.

The fresh life of spring and the resumption of activities such as sailing allude to the gradual recovery of order after the civil wars and culminate in Augustus' recovery after the winter of illness and his escape from the plot, his ability once again to take control of the ship of state. This optimism gives way to pessimism from line 13 onward, and by its ending reflects the poet's fears. Sestius should be able to rejoice at achieving the consulship in 23 after a winter of isolation from active political life: Horace and Sestius had both served under Brutus in 42, the poet as a tribune and Sestius as quaestor.⁷² Sestius' happiness is tenuous and fleeting:

Pallid Death knocks at the shops of the poor and the towers of kings, o Sestius, and the short-lived peak of life forbids us a lengthy hope (of happiness). Soon night (= death) and the Manes of fable and shadowy Plutonian home will press down on you. There is no escape, either by wine or the beautiful Lycian boy.

Turn now to 3.14, "*Herculis ritu ... Planco consule.*" The poem divides into a 3–1–3 pattern. In the first three stanzas Horace pictures a solemn state welcome to Augustus on his return in 24 from his three-year absence in Gaul and Spain. Stanza 4 is personal but still solemn. Stanzas 5–7 are personal but private; he admits he is mellower now than when Plancus was consul. Critics have long condemned the first four stanzas for a lack of true feeling and the final three as almost shameful: some have felt that Horace ought not celebrate the formal triumphant return of the emperor with a rowdy dinner party.⁷³ This, however, is the wrong approach. Horace was not being autobiographical or revealing something of his love life. He was concerned for the well-being of the state and knew that civil wars lurked just below the surface; he was sincerely worried about the Principate, threatened by discontent and even conspiracy. The poet prayed for stability more than he celebrated it.⁷⁴ Lurking behind the fantasy world with its invitation to a Greek symposium, complete with a *hetaera*, is a poetical commentary on the troubled times of contemporary Rome.⁷⁵

Herculis ritu modo dictus, o plebs,
morte venalem petiisse laurum
Caesar Hispania repetit penatis
victor ab ora.
unico gaudens mulier marito 5
prodeat iustis operata divis
et soror clari ducis et decorae
supplice vitta
virginum matres iuvenumque nuper
sospitum. Vos, o pueri et puellae 10
non virum expertae, male nominatis
parcite verbis.
Hic dies vere mihi festus atras
exiget curas; ego nec tumultum
nec mori per vim metuam tenente 15
Caesare terras.
I, pete unguentum, puer, et coronas
et cadum Marsi memorem duelli,

Spartacum sique potuit vagantem
fallere testa. 20

Dic et argutae properet Neerae
murrem nodo cohibere crinem;
si per invisum mora ianitorem
fiet, abito.

Lenit albescens animos capillus 25
litium et rixae cupidos protervae;
non ego hoc ferrem calidus iuventa
consule Planco.

Rightly hymned in the manner of Hercules, o Roman people, Caesar returns as victor from the Spanish shores, having sought the laurel of victory at the price of (near-) death. (5) May his wife (Livia), rejoicing at her matchless husband, lead the procession with sacrifices to the just gods – and so too may process the sister (Octavia) of the famous commander, and decorous with suppliant fillets, (9) mothers of maidens and young men now saved (from warfare). You, o boys and unmarried girls, do not speak words of bad omen.

(13) Truly, this day is holy to me and expels dark cares. I shall not fear civil strife nor death by violence so long as Caesar rules the lands.

(17) Go, boy, and fetch oil for anointing and garlands and a jug of wine dating from the Social War – if any could escape marauding Spartacus. (21) Go tell charming Neera to hasten to bind her hair in a net. If by chance her doorkeeper causes delay, dismiss him. (25) My graying hair softens my spirit, once desirous of strife and base quarrels. As a passionate youth when Plancus was consul, I would not have put up with this conduct.

The poem is little less relevant than the earlier 1.7, the Plancus ode, and both were released to the public in the collection of books 1–3 in 23. Most interpretations have seen in the *Planco consule* of the last line only a reference to the year 42 and a statement that by the time he wrote this ode Horace was no longer the hotheaded youth he had been nineteen years earlier. Then Horace had sided with Brutus and Cassius and partied passionately when he could. Now he was older, wiser, an Augustan loyalist, and could celebrate quietly and on his own. If Neera could not come, no matter. His graying hair kept pace with his cooling passions.

Careful craftsmanship is evident. In stanza 1 the poet makes Augustus on his return from the Spanish wars a new Hercules, thus recalling the legend that Hercules, returning home from his labors in Spain, had restored the Golden Age in Italy. The ancient cult of Hercules Victor at the Ara Maxima in Rome⁷⁶ commemorated the legend, as did the monumental Temple of Hercules Victor built in the late second and early first centuries on the hillside just outside the

walls of Plancus' favorite town. It dominated the town's economic and religious life and made Tibur a goal of pilgrims as well as a place of relaxation for the wealthy, Plancus among them, whose villas dotted the surrounding countryside. Augustus also relaxed here and conducted judicial business in the temple.⁷⁷

Augustus' efforts to reestablish the Golden Age made him a new Hercules: his deeds are Herculean and will win him divinity in fact, as Hercules' did in legend. Divinity was implied in "Augustus," the name Plancus had proposed. Vergil employed this same theme in book 8 of the *Aeneid*. There Hercules is one of a series of heroes who establish Golden Ages in Italy, in his case redoing the feat of Saturn whose temple Plancus was likely just then completing. After Hercules came Aeneas, then Romulus, and now Augustus. The two-word reference to Plancus at the end alludes subtly to the changes in the consular's life. His passions, like Horace's, had altered since 42. He, too, no longer partied as he had in former times, but lived quietly. Experience had made both poet and statesman into Augustan loyalists.

Stanza 4 is a sincere supplication of the ancient gods for peace, that there be no *tumultus*. "This festal day indeed drives away black cares from me, and I shall not fear a *tumultus* nor to die in violence while Caesar rules the lands." *Tumultus* is a technical term, and the English "tumult" doesn't catch the seriousness. The Senate proclaimed the existence of a *tumultus* at a time of danger from civil insurrection or even invasion⁷⁸; it was marginally less than a *bellum* in which enemies were proclaimed *hostes*. Horace was right: only a living (and healthy) Caesar Augustus prevented Italy from relapsing into wars and invasions. There were campaigns in the Alps, fighting in Spain endured several more years, and the east was restless. It was a very tense time. Augustus nearly died, the heir-apparent Marcellus did die, and there was a major political crisis at home; in 20 a diplomatic crisis threatened the east. Stanzas 5–7 are personal and private in outlook, but also a reminder that all who are old enough to remember the bad times of old should celebrate and rejoice with a passion befitting their gray hair. Plancus' consulship recalls the awful conditions of that year, the civil strife which was even worse than the Marsic (Social) War of 90–88 and the revolt of Spartacus in 73–71.

The reference to Plancus thus points to his continued association with Augustus, the new Hercules, with the cult of Hercules at Tibur, and with the worship of Saturn. By rebuilding Saturn's temple in the Forum he reinforced the cult allegedly established by Hercules.⁷⁹ In short, Plancus, too, rejoices "*Herculis ritu*," and lines 1 and 28 balance. In 23, as part of his governmental reorganization, the *princeps* saw to the designation of Plancus as censor for the next year.

The censorship of 22

Plancus' colleague was Paullus Aemilius Lepidus, nephew of his consular colleague in 42. No censors had held office during the civil wars, so the selection of Plancus and Lepidus, even if appointed and not elected, was another sign of Augustus' policy of traditionalism. The *res publica* could not be said to be fully *restituta* without a functioning censorship. Further, the censorship had always been the pinnacle of the Roman political career, an honor which few consulars attained and a *novus homo* almost never: Plancus was the first "new man" since 131.⁸⁰ He was even more the senior (active) consular in 22 than he had been in 27.

Designation in 23 to hold the censorship the next year was his reward for a decade of service to Augustus, his continual but inconspicuous influence, steadfast loyalty during the recent troubles and perhaps consultation in the "settlement of 23," though the prevailing secrecy leaves us in the dark on this point. Horace probably had the same assessment when he placed the Plancus ode seventh in the first book of the collected odes published in 23. By 23, the rewards for Teucer/Plancus following *certus Apollo* across the *ingens aequor* had become clearer. With regard to Lepidus, Augustus was showing that the disgrace of his uncle and cousin (the deposed triumvir and his son, executed for conspiracy in 30) did not entail obscurity for the entire family. Members of the ancient patriciate were always welcome to help usher in the Golden Age. A marriage of Plancus' son and Paullus' daughter may have renewed the long-standing bonds of *clientela* between the families.⁸¹

Augustus had high hopes for this censorship, intended to be more than another demonstration of the restoration of the traditional organs of state. He apparently planned an official commencement of the Golden Age in 23, dawning since Actium. Saturn had established the first *aureum saeculum*, and completion of Plancus' reconstruction of the temple to the god made a convenient beginning to celebration of the Golden Age. The terrestrial home of the deity should be ready for occupancy; its strongroom housed both the bullion of the public treasury (*aerarium*) and extensive state records essential to censorial duties. The *Ludi Saeculares* should have inaugurated the new age, with Augustus moving the ancient but dark rites to Dis and Proserpina above ground to the realm of light and giving the place of honor to Apollo and Diana.⁸²

The *princeps'* plans fell through. Late in the summer of 23 Marcellus died at age nineteen, wrecking the first plan to found a dynasty. The planned festival games were cancelled, and without them there was no opening of the Golden Age; Plancus and Lepidus may have been left with relatively little to do. Augustus and Agrippa had taken a census only a few years earlier, so it was

not time for another one. Their term was marred from the onset, as Dio reports that on their first day in office the platform on which they were standing collapsed. This evil omen damaged the prestige of the censors and the occasion. Contemporaries may also have seen it as continuing the troubles of the previous year. He goes on: “even at this time, in spite of their having been chosen to the position, Augustus performed many of the duties belonging to their office.”⁸³ The censors may not have conducted the *lectio senatus* and *lustratio* and resigned early in their term. Though no source reports it, they may have been injured, perhaps severely, in the fall. There is no provision for *censores suffecti*, so the *princeps* may have felt he had no alternative but to take their place. Plancus was quite senior, so recovery in quiet retirement is quite possible. Neither is certainly attested after this date.

As might be expected, Velleius’ account is hostile to Plancus but remarkably unspecific (2.95.3): “the censorship was performed in the midst of a feud and was neither an honor to them nor a benefit to the state.” The nature of the *discordia* between the censors is unknown. Surely Augustus was not “deliberately humiliating the senatorial censors.”⁸⁴ More likely, Velleius wrote up whatever happened in a manner to discredit Plancus. Possibly Lepidus sided with his relative and fellow noble, and Plancus resented it. There was no disgrace, though Augustus passed over the censorship in the *Res Gestae* to concentrate on himself. Plancus commemorated the office in his epitaph, and Propertius envisioned Lepidus’ widow Cornelia as proud of her husband’s office.⁸⁵

Dio does not mention any quarrel, but an incident recorded by Suetonius belongs in this context. L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, only an aedile in his late twenties, forced the sixty-two-year-old censor Plancus to step aside for him in the street. The arrogance was in keeping with several other similar acts recorded of this Domitius, “a detestable character.” Aristocratic haughtiness towards a *novus* is apparent, and prosopography comes into play to reveal something of the political overtones.⁸⁶

Ahenobarbus was probably Aemilius Lepidus’ nephew, his mother an Aemilia Lepida. His father Cnaeus had been consul in 32 and died shortly before the battle of Actium, not long after abandoning Antony and reluctantly joining Octavian. The father probably disliked Plancus for having weakened Antony’s cause by his “desertion” in 32 and perhaps for unrecorded differences of opinion such as subservience to Cleopatra when both were with Antony in the 30s.⁸⁷ The aedile stood close to the emperor: his wife, whom he probably married about 25, was Antonia Major, daughter of Augustus’ sister Octavia and Antony. Young Lucius thus had his own reasons for snubbing someone who had deserted Antony. Within a few years he developed closer ties to Lepidus. When Lepidus’ wife Cornelia died in 16, he took a new wife, Claudia

Marcella Minor, half-sister of Ahenobarbus' spouse. Marcella was a daughter of Octavia by her first husband C. Marcellus.

Plancus' last years; diplomatic service (?); ties to the *domus Augusta*

If the preceding analysis of the censorship is correct, the way is clear for a fresh approach to Plancus' last years, his family's standing in relationship to the house of the princeps, and an Epistle of Horace (1.3). This poetic "letter" is to one Julius Florus, who was accompanying Augustus' stepson Tiberius in a mission to Armenia in 20. The epistle is disarmingly light in tone and gives no hint of the seriousness of the issue at hand. There was an army of unknown strength: *exercitus, legiones*.⁸⁸ In the course of the letter Horace mentions Tiberius and three other persons in his entourage: Celsus Albinovanus, a Titius (lines 9–14), and a Munatius (line 31). To judge from the poem, all four seem to be men of letters and personal friends of Tiberius. It is improbable, however, that they were all along simply out of friendship. The setting is like that of the fifth Satire of the first book, the journey to Brundisium which preceded the negotiation of the treaty between Octavian and Antony in 40.

Agrippa had been in the east the previous year and Augustus himself was in Asia, Bithynia, and then Syria in 20, so the region was the center of imperial attention. Vital diplomatic and military issues were at stake, and the mission was too important to be entrusted to the young and inexperienced Tiberius (he turned 22 in 20) without one or more senior advisors who could keep a low profile while the prince was in nominal command. Rome's prestige in the east was at stake and delicate diplomacy required. Augustus did the same thing twenty years later. In 1 BC he sent M. Lollius (cos. 21) as *comes* to guide the untried Caius Caesar and then replaced him with P. Sulpicius Quirinius (cos. 12). Both had much experience in the east, Lollius as the first legate of Galatia in 25–21 and Quirinius in warfare against the Homonadenses sometime after 12.⁸⁹

Celsus and Florus were men of letters, but who were Titius and Munatius? The former might be the suffect of 31 – Plancus' nephew and with considerable experience in the east from the mid-30s. Horace's Titius looks to be a dilettante, but if the reference is to the suffect of 31, he was a senior senator and later legate of Syria (13?–10).⁹⁰ The latter was either our Plancus or his son. Several scholars have opted for the son,⁹¹ in part because they assume that the elder Plancus, if not deceased, was out of favor with Augustus after a poor performance as censor. This is improbable. The situation called for someone of seniority and who possessed familiarity with the territory and Rome's policy

in recent years. Who better than Plancus? Eleven years senior to his nephew Titius as consul, he had been with Antony in the east from 40 to 32, had probably accompanied Octavian in 31–29 as an advisor in the immediate sequel to Actium to acquaint him with Antony's policies, and was by general admission a skilled speaker and smooth operator. He was sixty-four years old, but we know of no physical impediment to his making the journey.⁹²

Munatius and Titius were seasoned and experienced senators chosen to guide Tiberius and his friends and who presumably had instructions from Augustus. The envoys' primary task was to install a new king on the Armenian throne: two senior consular plus the emperor's stepson made for a very prestigious embassy, all the more so with Augustus not far distant. The king to be installed was Tigranes; the Armenians had requested that he replace his brother Artaxes. Their father was the Artavasdes whom Antony had deposed in 34 and Cleopatra had executed about 30. Plancus and Titius were well versed with the situation and may have known these members of the Armenian royal family. The Parthian king Phraates IV seems to have been impressed, as Rome intended. He soon returned the standards captured from Crassus in 53, from Caecilius Bassus in 40, and from Antony in 36. He may have given them to Tiberius himself. On balance, however, it is more likely that Phraates turned them over to Augustus: Velleius, always effusive in praise of Tiberius, is silent and would not have ignored such a glorious moment in Tiberius' career had it occurred. In either case, Plancus and Titius likely witnessed the ceremony. The cuirass of the "Prima Porta" statue of Augustus shows a Parthian handing over the standards to a Roman, but it is not quite certain who that Roman is: Augustus or Tiberius, with the former perhaps the more likely.

The association of Plancus with Tiberius may be the first appearance of an *amicitia* that linked their families and endured into Tiberius' reign many years later and had fateful consequences. Book 1 of Horace's *Epistles* furnishes a glimpse into a network of imperial friendships of the late 20s, rather as Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* do some thirty years later. From *Epistle* 1.9 it is clear that Horace was on good terms with the young Tiberius; *Epistle* 1.8 reveals Celsus Albinovanus as *comes* and *scriba* to the prince; 1.3 adds Julius Florus. There may be more. Tiberius' father (praetor in 42 and a Caesarian officer) almost married Cicero's daughter Tullia in 50. Horace knew several of Cicero's friends.⁹³ Cicero corresponded with some Titii, perhaps relatives of the consul of 31, and if so, like the Munatii Planci acquaintances from southern Latium. Titius, however, is too common a name and the sources inadequate for the point to be pushed.

By the year 20 Plancus was in his mid-sixties and due for retirement. The mission to the east is his final appearance. He disappears from view, and there

is no record of his death. Perhaps we can picture him spending his final years in quiet luxury at his villa near Tivoli. A single word hints that he lived on for several more years. He may have worded his epitaph to read that his triumph was *ex Raetis* so that he could claim a victory in a region Rome annexed in 15. This subtle contradiction of the official Fasti's wording "*ex Gallia*" is the ultimate instance of Plancus' smoothness, in which case we can postpone his death to 15 or a bit later.

Notes

- 1 *Res Gestae* 2 for generous pardons. A notable exception is the condemnation of Antony's loyal commander P. Canidius Crassus: Vell. 2.87.3 and Dio 51.8.2–2 for him and the last of Caesar's assassins, P. Turillius and Cassius Parmensis. Similarly, at the Restoration in 1660, Charles II pardoned old foes except those responsible for the execution of his father in 1649; he even hung the corpses of Cromwell, his son-in-law Ireton, and Judge Bradshaw who had died in the 1650s.
- 2 Dio 53.19. Note the discussion by Rich (1990). He has little to say of Plancus.
- 3 Vell. 2.127–28. Reinhold 1933, 63. Dio 53.2.7: "the most suitable [or practiced] of the senators" were well informed of his intentions. Paullus Lepidus was in "the unobtrusive company of Caesar's confidants": Syme 1987, 26.
- 4 See Bosworth 1972, esp. 441–52; Syme 1986, 200. Pollio's *ferocia*, which was not opposition to Augustus, grated on smoother politicians like Plancus, with whom he had a running feud (see note 9 later).
- 5 Moles 2002, 106 remarks that "[f]or all his many faults, Plancus was a much less sanguinary figure than Augustus or Agrippa ... he was personally urbane and had a nice wit." He alludes to Syme 1939, 511 ("he had seldom been responsible for the shedding of Roman blood"), 158, 180.
- 6 Octavian and Agrippa had assumed the powers of the office in 28 to carry out various censorial functions, certainly an irregularity justified by a sense of emergency. Plancus and his colleague were the last pair of old-style censors, as thereafter the office was held by the emperors, sometimes with the heirs-apparent, as Vespasian and Titus in 75 AD.
- 7 Walser 1957, 22, 39–40.
- 8 Many of the most vicious accusations against Plancus, such as that he was a diseased traitor (*morbo proditor*) and low-life flatterer (*humillimus adsentator*), may only have become known sometime after Plancus' death ca. 20–15. They are first found in the Tiberian historian Velleius (2.67.4; 2.83.1–2; 2.88–9, 91), who may have gotten them in the works of Asinius Pollio; he had a long-standing feud with Plancus and refused to release his speeches until after his death. Since Pollio's works are lost, we will never know. Plancus refused to enter into a war of words: "*cum mortuis non nisi larvas luctari*," "only ghosts fight with the dead" (Pliny, *NH praef.* 31). If this is true, Octavian might not have known the allegations about some shady elements of Plancus' past. Cf. Seneca, *QN* 4 *praef.* 5: Plancus was *artifex ante Vitellium maximus*, but this, too, is later; Vitellius was thrice consul under Claudius.
- 9 See Salmon 1956; Eder in Raaflaub and Toher 1990.
- 10 Cooley 2009, 98, with commentary on 256–72. Cooley has a convenient discussion of how

- the *Res Gestae* was displayed in Rome and of the copies in Galatia at Ancyra, Pisidian Antioch, and Apollonia but nowhere else in the empire. Cooley 37: *RG* 8.2 and 22.2 for Agrippa; 14.1, 27.2 and 30.1 for family.
- 11 Plut., *Cicero* 49.5–6. The son never amounted to much and had a reputation as a drunkard.
 - 12 See Richardson 1992, 213–14; Stambaugh 1988, 50–1, 115–19; Zanker 1988, 79–82. Octavian began to downplay Caesar: respectfully deified, he was no longer an earthly problem: see Ramage 1985; Brunt 1984.
 - 13 On the speeches of “Maecenas” and “Agrippa” in Dio book 53, see Reinhold 1988, 165–210, esp. 166. The informal group of advisors later became the *consilium principis*.
 - 14 Maecenas suppressed a mysterious uprising led by M. Lepidus, son of the triumvir: Vell. 2.88; App. 4.50; Dio 54.15.4; Livy, *Per.* 133; Suet., *Aug.* 19.1. Other troubles: Dio 51.3–4; Plut., *Ant.* 73; Suet., *Aug.* 17.3. As Horace wrote in Ode 2.1.6 to Pollio, *incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso*.
 - 15 Brunt 1971, 608–09, citing Cic., *Phil.* 2.103 and Plancus’ epitaph; *Res Gestae* 15, 28, monopolizing all credit; cf. Salmon 1969, 138, 161.
 - 16 Dio 53.3–22 for 27. He omits Plancus, last mentioned in 32 and not again until the censorship of 22: 50.3 and 54.2.
 - 17 Suet., *Aug.* 28.1: “reddere” is close to “trastuli” of *Res Gestae* 34. Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 16–17: Suet. is “woefully inadequate.” At least, Suetonius omits the hostilities of Velleius 2.88–9, esp. 89.3; 91.1 for Plancus.
 - 18 See Brunt 1971, 558; Galinsky 1981 with references. The *princeps* returned to the idea in 18, outside the scope of this study. Williams 1962, 28 for the similarity between Cic., *pro Marc.* 23 and the moral reform program of 28.
 - 19 Grenade 1961, esp. 108–33; reviews by Brunt, *JRS* 51 (1961), 236–38; and Balsdon, *CR* 12 (1962), 77–80. Neither questions Grenade’s thesis that Cicero provided the intellectual origins of the Principate. Dio 52.42; 53.2–3.; Suet., *Aug.* 28–50 passim; *Res Gestae* 8, 21.
 - 20 Dio 53.1.4–5.
 - 21 The claim at *Res Gestae* 20.2 that he repaired 82 temples in his sixth consulship must mean that he initiated an enormous program of repair and construction in that year; 19.1 and Suet., *Aug.* 29 for Apollo Palatinus; cf. Miller 2009 passim.
 - 22 Suet., *Aug.* 29.5; cf. Tac., *Ann.* 3.72.
 - 23 Philippus’ father (cos. 56) was Augustus’ stepfather as he married Augustus’ mother Atia after the death of her first husband C. Octavius. The consul of 38 was a son by an earlier marriage and married Atia, the much younger sister of Augustus’ mother. Their daughter Marcia was a friend of Livia.
 - 24 Also *ILLRP* 431: “*L. Plancus L.f. cos. imp. iter de manib.*” The second salutation as *imperator* preceded reconstruction of the temple: spoils from two campaigns were used, those from the second increasing the splendor of a work that lasted for years. The second campaign is unknown and there was no triumph.
 - 25 Opting for an early date of construction: Platner-Ashby, *Topogr. Dict. Anc. Rome* 463–65; E. Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Rome, 2nd ed. 1960), 2.294; Zanker 1988, 66 (naming him “Manutius” on 49, 81); Stambaugh 1988, 118 (“Minucius” on 363 note 17); Richardson 1992, 343. Opting for a date in the 20s: Jullien 1892, 191–95; Ward-Perkins 1976, 184–99; and 1977, 66 and 334 (“Gaius”); Pensabene 1984, passim.
 - 26 Oros. 6.14.4f.; 7.2.11; Obseq. 125.
 - 27 Stambaugh 1988, figs. 8 and 9 shows how the Augustan building program changed the

- northwest end of the Forum. The new basilicas were the Julia and Aemilia. Archaeological work in 1810–13 cleared the temple, known as of Concordia until 1834: see Ridley 1992, 139–41, 189, 193 and plates 65–6. Dio 53.2; Suet., *Aug.* 36; Tac., *Ann.* 13.29 for Augustus' change in administration of the *aerarium*: two ex- praetors replaced the former system of two quaestors.
- 28 *Georgics* 1.125–28, 137–76; 2.458–540; also, *Eclogues* 4.6–10; 6.41.
- 29 *Aeneid* 7.45–55, 202–04; 8.324f. for Latinus ruling like Saturn; and 8.337–45 for the village. Macrobi., *Sat.* 1.8.1–9 and Dion. Hal. 1.34 for Hercules' altar. For the importance of Saturn: Anderson 1958, 519–32; Reckford 1959, 79–87; LaPenna 1963, 56–61.
- 30 *Res Gestae* 19–20 for Augustus' emphasis on his deeds. For the religiosity of the times: Liebeschuetz 1979, 55–100. Note also Cicero, *de Legibus* 2.19–23 for the importance of religious correctness.
- 31 I am in general agreement with the approach of Hammond 1968; he does not discuss Plancus. For the events of 27, see Lacey 1974; Rich 1990, 134–57, with bibliography. The argument of Judge 1974 is too legalistic.
- 32 Tac., *Ann.* 3.28. In *Res Gestae* 5–6 Augustus lists occasions when he refused to assume extraordinary or irregular powers in later years.
- 33 Cf. Galinsky 1996, 315 (the settlement “was carefully considered, negotiated, and orchestrated”) and 364 (“That the first ‘settlement’ of 27 B.C. was the product of carefully thought-out negotiations between the senate and Octavian is uncontested. Its provisions and trade-offs had been prepared for by some of his actions in the previous year. Besides, their careful calibration and their complexity attest their deliberate nature.”). Cf. Galinsky 2012, 63 (the actions on Jan. 13 and 16 of 27 were only “the final act, or enactment, of decisions and deliberations that had evolved over the previous three and a half years since the fall of Alexandria”). Schiff 2010, 296: Plancus “coined” the new name for Octavian, but she cites no evidence, and her discussion of 27 is weak.
- 34 Quote: Lacey 1974, 176, 181. The speech at Dio 53.31 is more the historian than Octavian, and there is no knowing what he actually said. See Liebeschuetz 1986, 345–65. Dio reflects his own time, some two centuries later. By not mentioning Plancus' role, Dio further glossed over the initial efforts to put republican shading in Augustus' position. Habicht 1990, 98–9 argues that by incorporating republican traditions Augustus rebutted Caesar's claim that it was dead: Suet., *Caesar* 77–8; Plut., *Caesar* 69; Dio 44.8; App. 2.107; Livy, *Per.* 116.
- 35 Good discussion of the *clupeus virtutis* and *corona civica* in Galinsky 1996, 80–90. The shield recognized his moral leadership based on traditional virtues that were public, not private.
- 36 Tribunician laws had conferred the extraordinary commands on Pompey in 67 and 66 and Caesar in 58.
- 37 Lacey 1974, 181–83, but not mentioning Plancus. Cf. Millar, *Ancient World* 20 (1989), 93–7. One might compare the debate in Congress in 1788–89 over the proper address for President Washington: excellency, highness, etc.
- 38 For instance, Galinsky 1996 devotes two chapters to the meaning of *auctoritas* and “the restoration of the Res Publica” without even mentioning Plancus. Galinsky 2012 mentions Plancus only as portraying Glaucus, deserting Antony and betraying the contents of his will (50–2); chap. 3 discusses the establishment of the Principate and emphasizes that the decisions taken in January 27 were the result of three years' careful deliberations, but there is no reference to Plancus' role. Everitt 2006, 186–87 mentions Plancus only as abandoning

- Antony and revealing the contents of the will; nothing on his role in 27 and 22.
- 39 Livy's epitomator omitted Plancus: *C. Caesar ... Augustus ... cognominatus est*. Pliny, *Ep.* 2.11.6: *sententia* as the formal term for a motion. Suet., *Aug.* 95 for Romulean omens.
- 40 Paullus Lepidus' father, Lucius (cos. 50), was deceased. His son later married Augustus' granddaughter Julia Minor. Nothing is known of him between 34 and his censorship in 22. See Syme 1986, 106, 109–11 and tables III, VI and VIII; Weigel, 1979, 637–46 and 1985 at 18–19, stressing that Lepidus rose by cooperation and submission. A proposal from him would be cronyism. Paullus later married Octavian's niece Marcella Minor.
- 41 Plancus was evidently the senior active consular. Piso Caesoninus (cos. 58), Marcus Philippus (cos. 56), and Domitius Calvinus (cos. 53) were senior to him but probably dead. M. Valerius Messalla Rufus (cos. 53 and augur for 55 years) was alive but evidently in semi-retirement. Plancus' consular colleague Lepidus was a patrician, but in disgrace and under house arrest; besides, his son had recently been executed for plotting, so he could not make the proposal. See Elder 1953, 8 note 6. Hanslik wrongly states that Plancus was the eldest consular: *RE* 16.545, rejected by Glauning 1936, 20. If still alive, Piso and Philippus would have made the ceremony look like a royal family, as the former was Caesar's father-in-law and the latter was Octavian's stepfather. Messalla Rufus: Macrobi., *Sat.* 1.9.14.
- 42 As Dio realized: 53.2.7. Eck 1996/2003, 49: "On this occasion, too, the Senate's action was far from spontaneous; Octavian's associates had deliberated at length about a possible *cognomen* that would distinguish him from all other Romans... . It was Munatius Plancus, the turncoat of the year 32, who introduced the motion in the Senate; we can be sure he was following instructions." "Turncoat" is biased, "following instructions" tends to reduce him to a puppet; overall the summary leaves unanswered the question of why Plancus was allowed to make the motion.
- 43 See Scott 1925, 82–105; Gagé 1930, 138–81; Yavetz 1984.
- 44 Plut., *Marius* 27.5; *Camillus* 31.2. If Camillus was the second Romulus and Marius the third, the name was being overworked and had lost its novelty. Note the threat to Pompey in 67: Plut., *Pompey* 25.4.
- 45 Thus, Cicero influenced Octavian in ways he could never have foreseen when he encountered "the boy" in the spring of 44. This may be the period of Pollio's feud with Plancus: Pliny, *NH praef.* 31. The squabble was partly literary (Quint. 1.5.56; 8.1.3; Suet., *de Gramm.* 10) but partly stimulated by jealousy: Pollio scorned Cicero after the latter's death (Sen., *Suas.* 6.14–16, 24, 27) but had flattered him in 43 (*Fam.* 10.31f. = SB 368, 409).
- 46 Jullien 1892, 186–89 observes that influence leaves little trace, regards Plancus as a friend of Augustus, and credits him with "Augustus." Taylor 1931, 158–60 credits Plancus with the "suggestion." Hammond 1933 (1968), 110–12: "undoubtedly emanated from the court circle." Lacey 1974, 182 says only that the selection of the name "probably took a lot of debating time to achieve." Dio 53.16.7, that Octavian "chose" "Augustus" need only mean that he approved of it.
- 47 Millar 1973, 59–61 points out that the vast triumphal powers had moved him toward monarchy, so "Augustus" reversed the direction. Judge 1974, 287 argues that Augustus did not want a legally defined position, and the new name was satisfactorily vague.
- 48 See the discussion of Eder 1990, esp. 72 and 83–4. *Res Gestae* 5–6, 10 and 34 stress Augustus' claim that he rejected unconstitutional powers.
- 49 Meister 1939, 57–112.
- 50 A sample: How 1930, 26–30; Syme 1939, 318–21 and 1959, 60–1; 1958, 44, 408–10;

- Wirszubski 1950, 87; Shackleton Bailey 1970, 87; Millar 1973, 63–7 and his essay in Millar and Segal 1984; Rawson 1975b, 152 (the Ciceronian *rector* [etc.] was purely advisory and led by example without Augustus' extensive military and political powers; Cicero looked romantically backward to the good old days); Cambeis 1984, at 258–60; Galinsky 1996, 74 (Octavian had no need for the lessons of Ciceronian political theory and used *moderator*, *gubernator*, and *princeps* in the plural and defined their role as advisory).
- 51 A sample: Grenade 1961; Weinstock 1971, 180; Benario 1973, 12–20; the essays by Stockton and Reinhold in *Thought* 55 (1980), 12–17 and 36–50; Millar and Segal 1984, 89–128; Habicht 1990, 98–9. As Eder 1990, 88–91 remarks, in 44–3 Cicero tried to bind “Octavian into the spiritual and political tradition by means of his counsel and his actions” (*Phil.* 5.23, 46, 58). The experiences of these years “may have led the later Augustus to see himself as the *gubernator* of the *res publica* whom Cicero had hoped for, and who, after fulfilling his duty as savior of the *res publica*, had to step back again into the ranks of his peers.”
- 52 Seneca, *QN praef.* 5. Seneca's parallel may refer to Vitellius' and Plancus' ties to empresses Agrippina and Livia, as well as to their successes in high politics. Each flourished by association with a superior and did not strive to rule.
- 53 Cicero, *de Re Publica* 1.33–4.
- 54 Suet., *Aug.* 7, 28.2 and 89.2; *Res Gestae* 34; Cic., *de Re Publica* 5.1.
- 55 Cic., *de Re Publica* 2.4–20; 1.54–64, 69. Cambeis 1984, 239–43 on Cicero's Romulus and the good king.
- 56 See Lepore 1954, 23–107, 371–72. *Princeps* came to connote priority in initiative and is a part of Cicero's shift from the older *concordia ordinum* to the *consensus omnium bonorum* of the *pro Sestio* 96–105, 136–43. Under Augustus *princeps* took on a new level of meaning. Galinsky 1996, chap. 1 is a useful analysis of *auctoritas*. He stresses its multiple meanings and moral connotations, and points out that in *Res Gestae* 34 Augustus links his new name with the assertion that he henceforward excelled everybody else in *auctoritas*, which guarantees his restoration of the Res Publica. Galinsky seems to push the meaning of *auctoritas* too far by making it the primary guarantee of the ensuing order (18). We must remember that *auctoritas* is extra-legal and persuasive; he could not command troops or administer the courts with it.
- 57 See generally Astin 1967. The book is cursory on Cicero's use of Scipio, 7, 9, 302.
- 58 Vell. 2.127.
- 59 The *rector* was more than the “amiable watch-dog” of Stockton 1971, 304–05. He occupied a position above and outside the normal organs of government, quite similar to what Augustus wanted people to think his position was. For his attitude to Caesar, see Ramage 1985.
- 60 Note Earl 1967, esp. 62–5; Benario 1973. Augustus worked to combine Ciceronian morality and humanity with Caesarian power politics.
- 61 Jones 1964; note also the essays by Yavetz 1984 and Millar 1984; Rich 1990, 139–40. Caesar never tried to win widespread upper-class support. See also Brunt 1989, chap. 6 on *libertas* as the public good, not absolute freedom.
- 62 Vell. 2.89.3–4.
- 63 Note how Livy portrays Evander as wholly admirable and a precursor of Augustus: “*auctoritate magis quam imperio regebat*” (1.7.4–15), a flashback in the Romulus story. See also Meier 1990: “Roman society necessarily implied republican forms of government.” Augustus succeeded “by pretending to be something he was not in reality” – a *princeps* not a monarch – and the pretense was crucial. He was acting, but not deceiving. Caesar had

- not even bothered to pretend.
- 64 See Cambeis 1984, stressing the incompatibility of the tribunician power with the Ciceronian *rector's* reliance on *auctoritas*. The same is true of the *imperium proconsulare maius*.
- 65 Dio 53.28.2–3 and 30.2; Levick 1976, 19–24.
- 66 Dio 53.27.5; 28.1 and 30 (Piso). Syme inferred Plancus as delivering the eulogy because of his known oratorical talents and prominence in 27: 1986, 38.
- 67 Dio 53.30; cf. Suet., *Aug.* 28. Piso: Tac., *Ann.* 2.43; Syme 1986, 369, Shotter 1974, 229–30. Statilia wife of Piso “Augur”: Syme 1986, 276: “in social origin and pretensions, ‘Statilia L. Pisonis’ was comparable to Munatia Plancina, but hardly her equal in arrogance.”
- 68 Dio 54.1–6. Syme 1939 has long been canonical on the conspiracy, and he retains his chronology in 1986, 387–93 (Dio is “inadvertent”). Recent work is moving to alternative views. Sumner 1978, 187–95 establishes a close relationship between the Terentii Varrones and Licinii Murenas over three generations. See also Raaflaub and Samons, 1990, 417–54; and Rich 1990, 174–76.
- 69 Suet., *Aug.* 66.3. Syme’s authority in 1939, 342 is the basis for the common verdict that Maecenas “fell”; see also his 1978, 114; 186, 389. For a rival thesis: Williams 1990, 258–75. He abandons his earlier acceptance of Syme in 1968, 87–8.
- 70 Dio 53.32.4–5. He was the son of Cicero’s friend the tribune of 57 and appears in *pro Sestio* 6, 10, 144. See Syme 1986, 41, 43, 383–84.
- 71 Former neutrals or opponents as a “target group”: Galserer 1990, 15–16. Sumner 1971, 257 put Aeserninus’ birth in 79 or even earlier, so he was very senior. For Arruntius: Syme 1986, 40–3, 260–64; tables IV and XVI.
- 72 Santirocco 1986, 31–2 has noted the relevance of the poem to the political situation in 23. Williams is closer to my understanding than are most, 1968, 81–3. Cf. Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 58–72 (68: “the poem is in no way about Sestius”); Commager 1962, 267–69, 280 (“the world of nature”), where 1.7 to Plancus (175) is among “the political odes.” Cf. Syme 1986, 381, 383–84. See also Anderson 1993, 115–22. Traill, *CJ* 78 (1983), 131–37 points out that if we find this ode flat and weak, perhaps we are missing something. The closing lines carry “important political connotations, intended by Horace and readily grasped by his contemporaries.”
- 73 Verrall 1924, 157–61 considers Horace’s loyalty was decreasing; so, too, Commager 1962, 262.
- 74 Kienast 1971, 239–51; Scholz 1971.
- 75 Williams 1968, 285–86, 297–99, 426–41.
- 76 Galinsky 1972, 126–52. Vergil strove to assimilate Aeneas to Hercules and, by implication, Augustus to both.
- 77 For a survey of Tibur and its environs, including the Temple of Hercules, see the works cited in Epilogue, and Wiseman 1983, esp. 299–307.
- 78 In clause 62 of the charter of Caesar’s colony at Urso in Spain the local magistrates have the right to levy troops in the event of a *tumultus Italicus Gallicusve*, reflecting the centuries when colonies were still all in Italy and in constant danger from Italian uprisings and Gallic invasions. *Tumultus* in the poem might even summon up memories of the efforts to deal with Antony in early 43.
- 79 Macrobian 1.7.27; Dion. Hal. 1.34.
- 80 Octavian and Agrippa had held censorial powers and performed censorial duties in 29–8,

but there had been no censors since 50, and before that in 70. In practice only men of consular rank were elected censor, but since a pair of censors was only chosen at five-year intervals during which there would be ten consuls, the office had always been highly competitive.

- 81 Hypothetical and undated marriage alliance: Morris 1965. Dio 54.2.1: Augustus “chose” the censors: *apedeixen* may mean only that he approved of them. Suet., *Aug.* 37: “*censores creari desitos longo intervallo creavit*” with no mention of the persons. Vell. 2.95.2 is silent as to the means of selection. “In 22 Augustus induced the consuls to hold censorial elections, perhaps *ex S.C.* He may well have proposed the names of those to be returned”: Brunt 1984, 430; followed by Rich 1990, 173. Syme 1986, 41 and 1987b, esp. 14. Jullien 1892, 196–99 is right. Suolahti 1963, 501–04 accuses Plancus of a lack of “personal prestige,” which is directly opposite to my analysis.
- 82 See Mattingly 1934, 162–65.
- 83 Dio 54.2.3.
- 84 Bosworth 1972, 450. Syme 1939, 404, 443: Augustus was “disappointed.”
- 85 *Res Gestae* 8; Propertius 4.11.67–9.
- 86 Syme 1986, 155–59, 341. See his table VII for genealogy and *RP* 4.418–40 for the family.
- 87 The Domitii may have held a grudge against Plancus for his Caesarian allegiance in the 50s and 40s and for his wariness of Cnaeus in 40 (App. 5.55). The aedile of 22 is grandfather of Nero.
- 88 Vell. 2.94.4, wrongly dated before the censorship of 22.
- 89 Syme, 1986, 321–22, notes 70–1
- 90 Neither Levick 1976, 25–6 esp. note 38, nor Sherwin-White 1984 discusses the composition of the entourage.
- 91 Moles 2002, 108 makes a case that the Munatius might be Plancus’ son and Titius a son of the suff. 31, both members of “the coming generation in the Augustan world.” He concludes “*Non liquet*, I think. *Epistle* 1.3 does not absolutely require that ‘Munatius’ be Plancus’ son (rather than some other younger relative).” This interpretation of Plancus’ descendants differs from mine. Moles sees all the named members of Tiberius’ entourage as his rough co-equals in age, whereas I argue that the mission required one or more men of seniority and experience.
- 92 The fall from the collapsed platform during the censorship may have damaged his *dignitas* more than his body: bumps and bruises, not serious impairment. We are never told he was seriously hurt.
- 93 Ti. Nero: Cic., *Fam.* 13.64 = SB 138; *Att.* 6.6 = SB 121. See Collins 1951–52, 164–68; and Sumner 1971, 258. Note Suet., *Tiberius* 4 and 6; Tac., *Ann.* 1; Vell. 2.75–7; Dio 48.15. Friends of Cicero and Horace: Treggiari 1973, though she does not include the Titii.

Epilogue

Perilous prominence: the Tivoli villa, the Temple of Saturn, and the mausoleum through the centuries

Grandchildren in the imperial elite

A consul of AD 13 is L. Munatius L.f.L.n. Plancus, and his sister is Munatia Plancina. They are the children or grandchildren of Plancus, and if the latter we need to inquire whether their parent(s) can be identified.¹ There was a second sister, known only through a passing obituary notice. Chronological considerations favor grandchildren, though no ancient source so labels them. As descendant of a consul, the consul of 13 was eligible to hold the consulship at age thirty-to to thirty-three, which puts his birth about 20 BC. Since the great Plancus was born in 84, this creates a gap of sixty-four years, rather too long for them to be consecutive generations. Similar calculations apply to Plancina, the only female in the entire family to be more than a bald entry in a genealogical table.² Without explanation, Plancina appears as a friend of Livia and the (second?) wife of Tiberius' crony Cn. Calpurnius Piso (cos. 7 BC); her elder son was consul in AD 27, so his birth can be dated to roughly 5 BC. If she was at least eighteen at his birth, she was born by 23 and was a few years older than her brother.³ Unless the children of a late marriage when Plancus was in his early sixties – like that of the sexagenarian Cicero with his teenage ward Publilia – and contracted soon after his return to Italy in 29, the consul of AD 13 and his sister ought to be his grandchildren.⁴ Their father is unknown and presumably died young. No more Munatii Planci are recorded in high office after the consul of AD 13, so the family may have died out or endured

without leaving notice.

The grandchildren appear frequently in Tacitus' account of the early years of Tiberius' reign, 14–20 (particularly from 18), where, as agents of the emperor and his mother Livia, they are paired off against Germanicus and his wife Agrippina the Elder in the east. Plancina is the assertive and evil lackey of the aging empress, assigned to counter Agrippina, while her husband was made legate of Syria and delegated to check the supposed excessive ambitions of Germanicus. The imperial plans went awry and disaster ensued. Germanicus died in 19, Piso was brought to trial in 20 and committed suicide rather than face conviction for treason (not murder), and Plancina escaped punishment only by Livia's pleas to Tiberius to forestall a trial. Long passages in *Annales* 1–3 reveal Tacitus' careful composition, in which he paralleled the rivalry between Plancina and Agrippina with that between Piso and Germanicus. Writing shortly after the debacle, Velleius Paterculus picked up some of the widespread hatred of Plancina and projected it on her grandfather.

Tacitus on Plancus, Piso, and Plancina

Augustus had delegated the consul of AD 13 to hold the office: the appointment indicates that the family remained high in the emperor's favor right to the end of the reign. Plancus led a delegation to the Rhine army in the fall of 14 to bear senatorial condolences to its commander Germanicus on the death of Augustus. Plancus had the misfortune to arrive in the middle of a mutiny and was saved from death by a quick-thinking centurion and the theatrical conduct of Germanicus. In 16 he may have been among the senators who proposed thank-offerings on the failure of the "plot" of Libo Drusus and that the date of his suicide should be a holiday.⁵ The rest of his life is not on record, and he is never stated to have been especially close to Tiberius, but it is possible that the emperor appointed him legate of Pannonia and left him in the post for seventeen years.⁶ This is far from certain, but absence from Rome ca. 17–34 would explain why we do not hear of him during his sister's tribulations in 20 and near-exile until death in 33.

How Plancina had become a protégé of Livia is unknown, but it is possible to speculate as to the origins of her marriage to Cn. Piso. Ruins of a number of Roman villas – walls, underground passageways, substructures – dot the hillside below Tibur. Local legends, their origins lost in the mists of time, and maps from the Renaissance into the 19th century fancifully assigned these structures to Brutus, Cassius, Lepidus, Capito, Caelius Rufus, Rubellius Blandus, Ventidius, Quintilius Varus, Maecenas, and Horace.⁷ Plancus' Tiburtine property was a subject of Horace's *Ode* 1.7. About 1670 Athanasius

Kircher discussed a number of these sites in his *Latium*, among them one assigned to Plancus and another to the Pisos, practically adjoining and not far from the Temple of Hercules and the ancient course of the Via Tiburtina (see [Figure 2.3](#).) He comments on Plancus' *cursus* known from the epitaph at Gaeta and then admits that there is no certainty about the villa ruins long attributed to him.⁸ The modern Strada di Pisones runs by the "Villa dei Pisoni," and a document from 985 mentions a nearby chapel of S. Maria in Pisoni, so the toponymy is at least old, if not convincing to skeptics.⁹ Even if this tradition is correct, there is no indication which branch of the Pisones was the owners.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Tiburtine society might provide the general background in which Plancus or his unknown son lined up Plancina's marriage to Cn. Piso. The marriage was mutually beneficial and strengthened ties that were now a generation old. Both families had enjoyed close ties with the imperial family since about 23 BC when Augustus saw to it that Cn. Piso became consul and Plancus was designated censor for the following year. Piso thus joined the inner circle of power of which Plancus had been a member for some years. The union was probably a step up the social ladder for the Munatii Planci, as the Pisos were in the highest level of the plebeian nobility, and the groom was a friend of Tiberius with whom he shared the consulship in 7. (Since Plancus the elder's mother and wife are unknown, we do not know how high up the social ladder the family had climbed previously. Hence for the sake of caution "probably" represented historical caution.)

Dynastic disaster in the east and at Rome, 19–20

Tacitus' artistry aside, it is certain that the rivalries which, motivated by suspicions and jealousy, broke into open conflict did immeasurable damage to the prestige of the Principate. Plancus' granddaughter was a major participant and bears much responsibility for the debacle; her brother's role, if any, is not on record. Tiberius suspected Germanicus' loyalty, probably without grounds. Livia feuded with Germanicus' wife Agrippina the elder. Augustus had intended the imperial succession to pass through Germanicus to his children. Tiberius was to be only a stopgap until the young Germanicus gained more experience, and his son Drusus was to be passed over. As Tacitus wrote up the history of these years he made Livia the prime mover in a long-running conspiracy to have the succession shift to Tiberius' line. The emperor and his mother had associates and clients working to fulfill their plans. Tiberius employed Cn. Calpurnius Piso, his longtime friend and ally; Livia made use of Urgulania and Piso's wife Munatia Plancina, among others.¹¹ Tacitus was interested in these women because through them he could expose the *res*

publica restituta as a sham. By the time he was writing, in the early second century after several tyrannical reigns, the original form of the Augustan state had vanished. Tacitus' prejudice against the Principate has long colored interpretations of Augustus, his colleagues and successors, and the women of the imperial court.

Censure of Plancina for her flagrant misdeeds in Syria was certainly deserved; she is not an innocent victim of prejudiced writing, and one can only imagine her smooth grandfather's disgust at his *neptis'* abrasiveness. Brought to trial in AD 20 with her husband, she maneuvered on her own and relied on the powerful influence of the empress to save her from severe punishment. She first got her case separated from her husband's, after vowing to stay by her man through thick and thin. Then Livia spoke behind the scenes to Tiberius who persuaded the senators to drop the charges. The *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* is even more detailed than Tacitus, and it is clear that Plancina was not tried and acquitted: she was never brought to trial at all. She disappears from view, presumably living in quiet semi-exile, for thirteen years. Tacitus mentions her death, perhaps a forced suicide, shortly after than of Agrippina; he thus maintained his pairing of these haughty *matronae* right to the end.¹²

Under normal circumstances, one would expect Plancina to have been entombed in her husband's family cemetery. But as she had cut the ties with Piso at the trial in 20, it is likely that she kept her distance in death as well. Consequently, her remains were probably placed in the mausoleum at Caieta, joining her grandfather and other ancestors. Her brother, perhaps last heard from as governor of Pannonia, presumably eventually joined her. As is so often the case, there is no evidence. The mausoleum's chamber is long empty, and there are no inscriptions other than that of the builder over the door.

Twenty-two years after Plancina had saved her life by separating her cause from her husband's and utilizing the *gratia* of friends in high places, another wife of a doomed politician became a model heroine. When Caecina Paetus was implicated in the conspiracy of Camillus Scribonianus, Arria remained loyal to him. She had the courage to show him how to bow out with dignity and committed suicide: "*Paete, non dolet!*" as she slid the dagger into her breast. Arria partially redeemed the blemished status of the Roman aristocratic lady which Plancina had been among the first outside the imperial family to tarnish. Plancina had essentially said "*Piso, non dolet!*" as she slid away into wealthy obscurity.¹³

The Temple of Saturn through the centuries

The temple Plancus financed stood intact for at least 300 years. It escaped two major conflagrations: one in 69, when the fighting between the Vitellianists and Flavians destroyed the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and the next in 81 which appears to have been on the other side of the Capitol and in the Campus Martius. Luck ran out in the third or fourth century. An inscription on the architrave above the landmark granite columns of its portico indicates a rebuilding following an undated fire: *SENATVS POPVLVSQVE ROMANVS INCENDIO CONSVMP TVM RESTITVIT*. The reconstruction incorporated the concrete and travertine of the basement and decorative bits from the architrave of Plancus' temple, but otherwise what visitors see today is its fourth-century successor. It remained in good shape into the 1400s, as Poggio Bracciolini reported it as nearly complete in the 1430s.

For centuries dirt and private buildings filled in and covered the podium and *cella*, and the temple itself was thought to be of Concordia. In 1810–1812 during the Napoleonic occupation of Rome French archaeologists freed the entire structure from rubble and houses, and in 1834 Luigi Canina correctly identified it as of Saturn.¹⁴ A piece of marble lying near the Arch of Septimius Severus was from Plancus' building – L. PLANCVS L.F COS./IMP ITER DE MANIB – and agrees with his epitaph.

The date of the fire and rebuilding are matters of controversy. Some date the fire mentioned on the architrave to the reign of Carinus in 283 and credit the rebuilding to Diocletian, thus completed by ca. 300. Others say the fire occurred in the mid-fourth century and reconstruction should be dated to 360–380. Evidence for the later date includes stylistic similarities between bits of the pediment, architrave, and column capitals and similar elements which can be firmly dated to the late fourth century. The inscription stating that the Senate and people undertook the rebuilding makes this one of the last monuments repaired by an authority other than the emperor, though it is doubtful that we should put it the context of the so-called “last stand” of the pagans in Rome.¹⁵

The mausoleum through the centuries

Over the years the mausoleum at Caieta has “served the times” as much as its builder did in his day and, though battered, has survived better than the tombs of most of his associates and patrons. A tower some 80 feet high off the Via Appia just west of Formia is allegedly the tomb of Cicero.¹⁶ Caesar's tomb on the Campus Martius in Rome has never been found, and the Temple of the Deified Julius in the Forum survives only to the height of a few feet.¹⁷ Nothing is known of the joint tomb of Antony and Cleopatra in Alexandria. The great

two-tiered cylindrical mausoleum of Augustus between the Via Lata (now the Corso) and the Tiber in the Campus has undergone even more vicissitudes.¹⁸ In AD 37 Caligula brought the ashes of his mother Agrippina to Rome and placed them in it.¹⁹ Her gravestone survives, so in this sense she has triumphed over her hated rival Plancina who has no known tomb. Hirtius received a public funeral and modest tomb in the Campus Martius.²⁰

The Lombards dominated much of Italy from the 560s, but their power fragmented into local duchies, as at Benevento. Charlemagne claimed to recreate the Roman Empire in 800, but neither he nor his successors had effective control south of Rome. State power disintegrated, and individuals (often bishops) took over what had for centuries been public functions. Landed elites came to dominate the towns and municipal life throughout southern Italy. Town-based life continued straight through from Roman times, but the spirit was different with more emphasis on trade, mercantile elites, and landed nobles. The local rulers at Gaeta, Amalfi, and elsewhere were originally labeled prefects (officials in the papal administration) but preferred to go by *hypatoi*, the Greek translation of Latin *consules*, a title which reflected their pride in their Roman past and loyalty to the Byzantine present. By the ninth century the Byzantine emperors at Constantinople were fighting a rear-guard resistance against the local lords, invading Lombards, and powerful raiding newcomers, the Muslim Saracens. They held onto ports as naval bases longer than they retained the inland, and Gaeta was one of these major ports. The Saracens captured most of Sicily in the mid-800s and pushed up the west coast of Italy. Their presence complicated the already complex, well-established intercity rivalries and shifts of power.

Gaeta's rulers fostered good relations with the Saracens while simultaneously serving as papal officials from the 860s, thus building power against their trade rivals at Naples and Amalfi to the south. Trade with the Islamic world was acceptable, but Saracen piracy and conquests leading to a permanent presence along the Italian coast were not. Gaetans used Plancus' mausoleum as a watchtower against all seafaring invaders, whatever their religion and political affiliation. Like all the coastal cities, Gaeta swung back and forth in its relations with the Muslims. Saracen pirates sacked Rome in 846, captured Misenum in 848, and destroyed Formiae across the bay from Gaeta in 859. Formiae's bishopric had already been transferred to Gaeta.

In the later ninth century the Muslims had a base on the lower Garigliano (Liris) river, only a few miles from Plancus' tomb. From it they sacked two great monasteries in the vicinity: San Vincenzo al Volturno and Monte Cassino. In 909 a Christopher son of John allowed his grandmother to give land at the church of St. Lawrence near Gaeta to a church of St. Michael ad Planciano, so the ancient presence of the Planci was still alive, though the

town's inhabitants may no longer have had any idea of who Plancus was.²¹

Around 910–912 Gaeta's rulers upgraded themselves to *duces* and *patricii* as an incentive to join the great papal coalition led by John X and the duke of Spoleto. With the assistance of a Byzantine fleet, the allies drove the Arabs from their camp on the Vulture in 915. A little over a century later, in 1032, Gaeta fell to the duke of Capua. In 1064 it was incorporated into the domains of the Norman princes of Capua, formerly lords of Aversa.²² This long period of warfare caused extensive damage all through Latium and Campania, and Plancus' tomb suffered. Its original superstructure – the earthen mound with a statue or trophy at its peak – disappeared, replaced by crenellations.

In the Second World War the mausoleum had several close calls, particularly late in 1943 and in the early months of 1944. Gaeta's bay is the only deep-water port between Naples and Rome (the next to the north are Civitavecchia and Livorno), and the Allies desired to take it so as to circumvent the Tyrrhenean end of the German defensive positions. Field Marshal Kesselring determined to make the Allied advance up the peninsula as difficult and costly as possible. The Gustav Line ran from the mouth of the Garigliano river at Minturno up the river to where the Rapido feeds into it, past Monte Cassino, and over the Abruzzi to the Sangro river and the Adriatic coast. A few miles up the coast behind Gaeta, outposts of the Hitler Line ran around the Aurunci mountains and joined the Gustav Line. Fortifications on Monte Orlando were thus the southwestern tip of the German defenses. Remains of barracks and storerooms as well as ring-mounts for swiveling anti-aircraft guns are still visible. In the event, landings in September were at Salerno, where there were better beaches and air cover from bases in the south and Sicily could be more easily provided.

The primary route of the Allied advance was up the Via Casilina past Cassino. The Via Appia along the coast was too confined by the Aurunci mountains and then the canals through the Pontine marshes which could be opened to flood the coastal strip. The decision to go by way of the Via Casilina farther inland may have saved Plancus' mausoleum from destruction. By early 1944 the 14th Panzer Corps' 94th division faced the newly arrived U.S. 85th infantry division, part of the Fifth Army under Gen. Mark Clark.

After a winter of terrible weather and fruitless military operations, "Operation Diadem" began on May 11, 1944. Formia fell to the 338th regiment of the 85th division on May 17 and Gaeta on May 19. Allied troops pushed through the Hitler Line on May 23 and took Terracina the next day.²³ Aircraft conducted bombing runs, and warships pounded German infantry positions and artillery batteries all along the coast and inland. The mausoleum suffered some damage but it was subsequently repaired and the Medieval accretions removed; it is now closer to its original form than in many centuries. This

study will have accomplished its purpose if it, too, succeeds in clearing away some of the bad reputation which has accumulated around its subject in the two millennia since his death and restored him to his proper place in the Roman Revolution.

Notes

- 1 Moles 2002, 107–08 for a recent discussion. Admitting uncertainty, he tentatively suggests that *Ode* 1.7 celebrates a recent marriage for Plancus and the prompt birth of a daughter, with a son to follow. Horace and Plancus were good enough friends that the poet could make a gentle, private joke to demonstrate “the patriotic harmonization of public and private, political and erotic. What a man. (108). It strains the text of the ode to find an allusion to a marriage in 25–4, for which there is absolutely no other evidence. Grandchildren are to be preferred.
- 2 Tac., *Ann.* 2.75 for the other sister. For Plancina: 2.43, 55, 74; 3.1–17; 6.26 (death in AD 33); Dio 57.18; 58.22.5.
- 3 Moles’ calculations (2002, 107–08) are almost identical: the boy born ca. 20 and the girl by 22. He puts her marriage at age fifteen, so he has her about three years younger than I do. Piso and Plancina had another son as well. For Piso as born 44/43 and Plancina as his second wife: Syme 1986, 58, 318.
- 4 Older literature made the consul of AD 13 Plancus’ son, as Syme 1986, 58, 369, 374, 379; and 1987a, 319–20, 330. More recent studies have opted for grandson. Cf. Morris 1965; Raepsaet-Charlier 1987, nos. 560, 562, and stemma XXII. Late marriages are known: Dec. Brutus cos. 77 was the son of the consul of 138; Lepidus cos. 78 was probably grandson of the consul of 187. *CIL* 6.22668, “*L. Munati Plancinae l[ibertini] Polycliti*,” shows Polyclitus was a freedman in the household of Plancina daughter of a L. Munatius, but not which one.
- 5 Tac., *Ann.* 1.31–49 for the mutiny and envoys at 14, 39; Dio 57.25.5. Levick 1976, 73–6 and Shotter 1968, 194–214. The MS of the *Annals* at 2.32.2 is corrupt (“L.p.”) and Syme proposed reading “L. Plancus”: 1968, 53–4; 1958, 750 note 2; Levick 1976, 149–50.
- 6 Morris 1965 discussing *CIL* 6.1743, “*Munatio Planco Paullo v.c. praesidi Pann[oniae] per ann[os] XVII. Crepereius Amantius et Ca[ei]onia Marina c.f. eius ababo suo*.” Crepereius may be the consul of 345; *ababus* is loosely “ancestor,” not great-great grandfather, as four generations do not go back three centuries. Cf. AE 1990.64.
- 7 The villa of Maecenas was only correctly recognized as the Temple of Hercules Victor in the mid-19th century. Horace’s Tiburtine villa, to be distinguished from his Sabine estate, lies under the ex-convent of Sant’Antonio by the Anio. Several villas are near the modern Via di Pomata, itself a Roman access road to the four aqueducts that swung around Tibur and slowly dropped to the Campagna. The pamphlet “La Via di Pomata” published by the Commune di Tivoli on its back page reproduces a part of the 1779 archaeological map of S. Cabral and F. del Re which locates the villas in question.
- 8 See Evans, 2012, 32 (with note 45) and 126. As with the territory around Tusculum, so with that of Tibur: “Thus, along with useful archaeological evidence, we are given a romantic overview of ruins everywhere ... that is more evocative than informative.” P. 2 note 7 gives a link to a digital reproduction of Kircher’s *Latium* at the Wolfenbuttel Digital Library: <http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/22-4-hist-2f/start.htm> (accessed February 21, 2017).

- 9 Recent analyses: Mari 1991, 129–34 (Plancus; “la posizione panoramica è stupenda, con ampia vista verso Tivoli e la Campagna Romana”) and 145–51 (Pisos) for description and photos of the surviving ruins; Coarelli 1982, 73, 101. His map on 73, reproduced from Lanciani, labels the villas of Brutus, Cassius, and the Pisos; no. 5 is the “Villa detta di Munazio Planco.” The identification of the villa of Brutus is “del tutto fantastico”; that of Cassius derives from 10th-century documents mentioning *fundus Cassianus* or *Cassanus*, whence the modern Carciano. Other ruins on 99–103. The modern name Madonna di Quintiliolo derives from the villa of the Quintilii Vari. Cf. also Ashby 1927, 114 and 120–25; he mentions the villa of the Pisos but not that of Plancus.
- 10 Cn. Piso husband of Plancina descends from the Cn. Piso who was quaestor in 65. The other line produced consuls from the second century BC and includes Piso Caesoninus (cos. 58, Caesar’s father-in-law) and his son consul in 15.
- 11 L’hoir 1994. Barbarian women might hold power, but Roman women could not, and *duces feminae* led to ruin for their societies. “To Tacitus, female rule inevitably presumes slavery”; and in Rome it debases the *mos maiorum*. Baumann points out that the picture of Livia is much fuller once we have the *Annals*; from AD 14 “Livia, greatly enhanced in status after Augustus’ death, claimed from a reluctant son, and to a large extent succeeded in obtaining, a share in the government”; her “incessant demands for a share in power” troubled Tiberius for years: 1992, 124, 130, 133. See the full account of Livia in Barrett, 2002, though he does not analyse Plancina.
- 12 Tac., *Ann.* 6.2–26; Dio 58.22.4–5; Suet., *Tib.* 51.2.
- 13 Pliny, *Epist.* 3.16; Dio 60.16.5–6; Suet., *Claudius* 13.2 and 35.3; Martial 1.13; Tac., *Ann.* 12.52. See Woodman and Martin 1996, 113–15.; Osgood, 2011, 44–5; *ILS* 6261.
- 14 *CIL* 6.937 = *ILS* 3326. See Ridley 1992, 189–93 for the clearance of 1810–12 and an engraving by L. Rossini in 1817 of the finished project; 22–3 for drawings by Heemskerck in 1530s, du Perac in 1575 and Piranesi in 1748–78 showing the rubble fill all across the Forum.
- 15 Coarelli 1995, 75–6 for fire in 283. Pensabene 1984, 10–11, 61–76 for reconstruction in 360–80 and bits of Plancus’ original reused in the late fourth century, notably some of the column bases and reset pieces of the cornice. The Ionic capitals are similar to those of San Paolo fuori le Mura built 385–91. See his Conclusions on 151–52 and the English Summary on 179. He stresses the pagan “last stand” before the legislation of Gratian and Theodosius I outlawing the old cults. See also Richardson 1992, “Saturnus, aedes”: most of the substructure’s concrete with travertine facing is from Plancus’ time.
- 16 Richardson 1976 s.v. “Formiae”; Aurigemma and de Santis 1957, 31–3. Cicero was murdered nearby: Plut., *Cic.* 47–8; D’Arms 1970, 69–70.
- 17 Richardson 1992, “Iulius, Divus, Aedes” and “Tumulus Iuliae”; Weinstock 1971, 355; Suet., *DJ* 84; Dio 44.51.
- 18 Richardson 1992, “Mausoleum Augusti.” The varied history of this structure culminated in Mussolini’s efforts to make it a shrine to *romanità* as he saw himself a new Augustus. See Kostoff, 1978. As of the time of this writing plans are underway to monumentalize the entire Piazzale di Augusto and open the mausoleum to the public.
- 19 Barrett 1989, 60–1; *ILS* 180. Augustus’ statue atop the mausoleum towered over Rome, but Plancus’ stood far higher atop Monte Orlando.
- 20 ILLRP 419; Livy, *Per.* 119; Vell. 2.62.4; Richardson 1992, “*Sep(ulcrum) A. Hirtii*”
- 21 Fellmann 1957, 9–10 cites 10th-century evidence for the ruins of a villa “*Plancianum*” incorporated into the city wall. Recalling the tomb of the Sempronii Atratinii near Gaeta, in 1006 a Leo-owned land near Semproniano. Cf. Coarelli 1982, 357–58.

- 22 For Gaeta, see von Falkenhausen in Guillou 1983, 323–26 and 347–54; and the entry in the *Oxford Dict. of Byzantium* (1991); Skinner 1995.
- 23 For narratives, see Jackson 1967, 85–90, 222–25; 348–55 for a chronology; Schultz 1949 for the 85th division and its component regiments; and Caddick-Adams 2013, esp. 275–77 for the fall of Formia and Gaeta. Formia was heavily bombed, but Gaeta less so. None of these studies mention Plancus’ tomb; the works of Fellmann and Coarelli allude to wartime damage and subsequent repairs.

Appendix I

L. Licinius Crassus and the Munatii Planci

At some point in the period 104–192 the jurist and orator L. Licinius Crassus (cos. 95, cen. 92) defended in court a person whose name appears in the manuscripts as C. or Cn. Plancus or Plancius. Only an exchange between Crassus and the prosecutor M. Junius Brutus rendered the case memorable; the defendant was evidently not important and the charge is not known. Since, however, a jury of *equites* heard the case, the charge was probably extortion (*repetundae*) and, if so, the defendant was a senator and former provincial official (to have had the opportunity to extort). The trial had political overtones.¹

The matter is of concern to us only if the defendant's name was Plancus and not Plancius. All known Planci are in the *gens Munatia*, and none are attested with the *praenomen* Cnaeus. The point opens a line of connections, in particular, descent from the senator C. Munatius attested in 173 and kinship with the L. Munatius Plancus, son of Caius, whom shortly before 90 the Italian and Greek *negotiators* on Delos honored with a statue.² The two could be brothers: see [Figure 2.3](#).

Kinship with our L. Munatius Plancus (cos. 42) is no more than a possibility, but it ought to be kept in mind. His younger brother was evidently Caius by birth but became L. Plautius Plancus by adoption. See [Chapter 1s](#) and [4](#) for his career.

Two assumptions underlie what follows: the person on trial at an unknown date in 104/92 was a C. Plancus and he was kin – perhaps not very close – to our Plancus. M. Junius Brutus also attacked the *princeps senatus* M. Aemilius Scaurus (cos. 115) ca. 114.³ We are in the general milieu of the powerful *factio* of the Caecilii Metelli, with which both Scaurus and L. Crassus were affiliated. No ties between Metelli and Planci are known, but there is evidence that

members of the Metellan group were in touch with prominent *domi nobiles* in southern Latium and offered to promote their political careers, as the great M. Lepidus did for C. Munatius in the 170s.

Scaurus attempted to persuade Cicero's grandfather, M. Tullius Cicero, a leading citizen of Arpinum, to enter political life at Rome.⁴ Scaurus, who "governed the world with the nod of his head," would certainly have furthered the elder Cicero's career had the latter had political ambitions. Scaurus had a villa and perhaps estates near Formiae, and he was a businessman as well as a politician.⁵ If the Munatii Planci were prominent at Formiae-Caieta, Scaurus might have made a similar offer to Plancus' father or grandfather. There is no evidence that he did, but then only a passing reference in Cicero preserves the proposal to Cicero *avus*. Social relations between Roman aristocrats and illustrious locals were far more extensive than used to be thought.⁶

Crassus had friends in southern Latium. He married his daughter into another leading Arpinate family, the Marii – to the son of the great Marius. Cicero's aunt Helvia married a friend of Crassus, L. Visellius Aculeo. Cicero, his brother Quintus, and Aculeo all studied under Crassus, who was second only to Scipio Aemilianus as Cicero's ideal statesman. The Tullii Cicerones, Gratidii, and Marii were well connected to powerful Romans. Gratidius, his son Gratidianus, and Cicero's uncle Lucius Cicero also had ties to Crassus' friend M. Antonius (cos. 99, cen. 97).⁷

If C. (Munatius) Plancus was a *cliens* of Crassus, perhaps we can add a kinsman, L. Plancus the father of our Plancus. The circle of Crassus' pupils may then be part of the origin of the friendship between Cicero and Plancus' father, and the explanation of how Cicero knew Plancus from the latter's boyhood. One Munatius Plancus obtained Crassus' help in court (if the name and date are correct), and another was legate under Sulla in 87. Both would have been in the Senate, perhaps the first Plancus since 173.

Without much better evidence, this can be no more than a hypothesis, but it offers a reasonable background to the *necessitudo* and *familiaritas* between Cicero and Plancus father and son, which is otherwise left completely unexplained. Plancus' family doubtless had considerable wealth, probably derived from a mixture of agriculture and commerce. The inscription at Delos hints at the slave trade, and other evidence points to banking.⁸ Plancus himself soon increased the wealth enormously, as otherwise he could not have built the mausoleum at Caieta and Temple of Saturn in the Forum at Rome, both expensive projects.

One additional consideration is not out of place here. L. Crassus (cos. 95) was a second cousin of P. Crassus (cos. 97); their grandfathers Publius and Caius were consuls in 171 and 168. The consul of 97 was the father of the triumvir (born 115), a contemporary of Plancus' father. Cicero and the triumvir

were no more than civil toward one another; the *vetus necessitudo* Cicero claimed in 54 (*Fam.* 5.8 = SBV 25) was gross flattery. Crassus had two sons: Marcus, born ca. 86/85, and Publius, born 83/82. They were close coevals of Plancus, and Publius Crassus was a great admirer of Cicero, who lamented his death at Carrhae in 53.⁹

Notes

- 1 Cic., *de Oratore* 2.220; *pro Cluentio* 140f.; Quint. 6.3.44; Pliny, *NH* 36.7. Cf. Münzer, *RE* “Munatius” no. 27. The OCT of *de Or.* 2.220 reads Cn. Plancius; that of the *pro Cluentio* 140 reads Cn. Plancus but with a note that the Cn is from the MSS of *de Oratore*, whereas C. is found in those of *pro Clu.* and Quintilian. For a discussion of the incident, see Gruen 1968, 198 n. 1, repeating his verdict from *Historia* 15 (1966), 59f. Sumner 1973, 77 prefers Caius Munatius Plancus. Shatzman, 1975, 274 has no doubts that the person is Cnaeus Plancius, the “princeps equestris ordinis” of *pro Plancio* 17, 23, 32; Schol. Bob. 155.
- 2 *ILS* 8961 a-b = *ILLRP* 359f.: *L. Munatius C.f. Plancus Italicei et Graeci qui Delei negotiantur*.
- 3 Cic., *pro Font.* 39; *Brutus* 130; cf. Gruen 1968, 125f.; Sumner 1973, 77.
- 4 Cic., *de Legibus* 3.36. See Nicolet 1967, 276–304, analyzing a series of connections between Scaurus; his senatorial colleagues; and the Tullii Cicerones, Gratidiani, and Marii. Cf. Wiseman 1971, 30f., 37; Mitchell 1979, 2ff. On Scaurus, see Bates 1986, who, however, does not assess Scaurus’ dealings with municipal magnates. Gruen 1968 assesses Scaurus’ political shrewdness.
- 5 Cic., *pro Font.* 24. Villa: Shatzman 1975, 263f.; Aurigemma and de Santis 1957, 58; cf. G. Rosi, “Il territorio di Scauri” 97–119 in Coarelli 1989. The town of Scauri lies along the coast from Formiae. P. Arthur’s essay in Coarelli discusses the decline of the region in the later empire. Scaurus and Marius cooperated in business but not in politics: Pliny, *NH* 36.116. Shatzman 1975, 280 for Marius’ property at Minturnae; *ILLRP* 726, 728; Plut., *Marius* 37–9. Bates 1986 does not discuss Scaurus’ property or commercial ventures.
- 6 Gruen has pointed out that Crassus’ career was “marked, above all, by flexibility and political sagaciousness that had brought him widespread respect and *dignitas*, pointing to friendship with Q. Scaevola and M. Antonius” (1968, 192f.).
- 7 See Rawson 1971, 75–89, followed by Mitchell 1979, 10–21, 28–38, 42f. Cicero’s grandmother Gratidia was sister-in-law of the great Marius, as her brother married Marius’ sister. A son of Marius and Gratidianus was adopted by Marius’ brother Marcus and became M. Marius Gratidianus: he served as praetor in 85–4 under the government of Marius’ son Caius and Cinna. Another son was legate under Marius and killed by Sulla’s mutinous troops in 88. The elder Gratidius was *perfamilias* with Antonius (*Brut.* 168) and served as his prefect in Cilicia dying there in 102. See further Nicolet 1967, 288–95; Mitchell 1979, 2–43 *passim*.
- 8 *ILLRP* 1011 for the banker one of whose slave agents is named on a *tessera nummularia* found at Agrigentum on Sicily: “Teupilus (= Theophilus) Munati servus sp(ectavit) a.d. Kal. Sex. L. Gel(lio) Cn. Lent(ulo) [coss. = 72 BC].” See Crawford 1985, 241; Shatzman 1975, 75–83. For the *conventus* at Agrigentum, cf. Brunt, 1971, 220ff. Other Munatii-owned tileyards in Cisalpina: *ILLRP* 1151–52 = *ILS* 9646 a-c. Perhaps the land commissioner of 173 set aside some land for himself and descendants continued there; Shatzman 1975, 69, quoting Sículus Flaccus 157L for the right of commissioners to reserve land for their own use.

Many senators owned brickyards: Peacock and Williams 1986, 24f., 39–43, 62f.; T. W. Potter, *Roman Italy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), 106–09.

- 9 Brunt 1989, 358f. for Cicero and the triumvir, Syme *RP* 1220–25 for the sons. Cicero and Publius: Plut., *Cic.* 33 and *Crassus* 13; Cic., *Brutus* 281f.; *Qfr.* 2.8 = SB 12; *Fam.* 13.16 = SB 316.

Appendix II

T. Munatius Plancus Bursa

Rioting, which had marked much of 53, peaked in early 52, when Milo and his gang of thugs murdered P. Clodius on the Appian Way. The ensuing chaos led to the appointment of Pompey as sole consul: he proceeded to restore order. Two outspoken tribunes dominated the opposition to him: C. Sallustius Crispus and T. Munatius Plancus Bursa. The future historian Sallust is far more famous, but his apparently more violent colleague Bursa is of greater importance here. The learned Asconius in his commentary on Cicero's *pro Milone* (32C) labeled him the "*frater L. Planci oratoris*," brother of the orator Lucius Plancus, i.e., our Plancus. Acceptance of Asconius has been universal, but Shackleton Bailey has proposed that *frater* should be taken here as "cousin."¹ This identification is accepted here, though with the caution that it is not certain.

Other than Asconius' statement, nothing indicates that Plancus and Bursa were either kin or friends. To be sure, politics and the civil war could divide families. Bursa's radicalism does not in itself prove that he was unrelated to our Plancus any more than does his joining Plancus on Cicero's side indicate kinship. More to the point is Cicero's testimony. Cicero regularly refers to our Plancus and his brother Plautius Plancus with such terms as *necessitudo* and *amor*, whereas he is invariably hostile to Bursa.

One of Pompey's corrective measures in 52 was a law against violence. Cicero prosecuted Bursa under the terms of this law sometime after Bursa went out of office on December 9, 52 (and thereby lost immunity from prosecution), but before Cicero left to become proconsul of Cilicia in May 51. This is Cicero's only known prosecution after that of Verres in 70.² Unfortunately, Cicero's speech is lost: it might state specifically whether Bursa was related to Plancus. The speech might also have provided valuable

information on the Plancus family – origins, some of the women, other men – and its ties to Cicero himself.

Affiliation with Clodius by itself would have put Bursa on Cicero's blacklist, but he had a particular grievance against him. Evidently Cicero had defended Bursa in 53 even though he knew him guilty. Bursa had responded by attacking a friend of Cicero and by whipping up the crowds against Cicero during Milo's trial in 52. Cicero justifiably regarded him as an ungrateful client.³ Cicero's prosecution of Bursa was evidently not one of his better speeches, even though he gained the conviction. Bursa soon fled Rome. By May he was at Ravenna where he won protection from Caesar.⁴ By now civil war was close at hand and Caesar was willing to pick up Pompey's opponents. Somewhat later Caesar won recall of the victims of the Pompeian trials of 52. Bursa was in Rome in September 46.⁵

Cicero's hatred of Bursa reappears in early 43. In a letter to Plancus in Gaul, Cicero says that only brigands, *latrones*, support Antony (*Fam.* 10.5 = SB 359). In the sixth and later Philippics (10; cf. 10.22, 11.14, 12.20 and 13.2, 27) Cicero had labeled Bursa *latro*. It is improbable that in a letter to win Plancus' support for the war against Antony he would have used such a term for the recipient's brother. More likely, he would have omitted all reference and passed over the point in silence. Thus the pejorative *latro* reinforces the inference that Plancus and Bursa were not brothers and perhaps not even close kin.

In February, Pontius Aquila, a subordinate of Decimus Brutus, defeated Bursa near Pollentia in north Italy. Bursa suffered a broken leg, as Cicero gleefully reported in his Philippics, and is never heard of again. Within a couple of months Decimus Brutus and our Plancus had joined forces at Culuro. There is no sign that Plancus gave a thought to the fate of Bursa.

Notes

- 1 Bailey 1988, 73; cf. MRR 3.146. See Ramsay 2009, 54ff. for Bursa.
- 2 Taylor, 1949, 116, 153; Brunt, 1989, 372ff.
- 3 Gruen 1974, 346f, 529f. and Shackleton Bailey's commentary on *Fam.* 7.2 = SB 52. Both say that the Munatius of *Plut.*, *Cic.* 25.1 is Bursa. Cicero says he hated Bursa even more than he did Clodius; cf *pro Milone* and *Asc.* 37C.
- 4 The oration: *Dio* 40.55; see *Fam.* 7.2 = SB 52 in Jan or Feb. 51. Sallust and Bursa as tribunes: *Plut.*, *Pomp.* 55 and *Cato minor* 48; *Val. Max.* 6.2.5, where the *senatorem nocentem et infamem reum* is probably Bursa. Lintott 1968 pp. 109f., 200, 218f.; Gruen 1974 pp. 339, 344–50, 529f.
- 5 *Fam.* 8.1 = SB 77, from Caelius in May 51. *Fam.* 12.8 = SB 205; *Caes.*, *BC* 3.1; cf. *Fam.* 9.10 = SB 217. For the law of recall see the discussion in Yavetz 1983, 64ff.

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Index of People

Romans are listed by their *nomen* except for the few whose *cognomina* are more familiar. Thus the orator and statesman appears as Cicero, M. Tullius, while his brother and son appear as Tullius Cicero, Q. and Tullius Cicero, M. respectively. The dictator is Caesar, C. Julius and Agrippa, M. Vipsanius. The entries for Caesar's heir and adopted son are as Octavian until 27, thereafter as Augustus. References in the notes are not indexed unless they significantly expand the content of the text.

Complete indexing of the major persons, most conspicuously Plancus, would make the index excessively long. Consequently, the index entries in these instances are confined to major events or periods.

Aelius Lamia, family [56](#), [66 n. 17](#), [146](#)

Aelus Lamia, L. (cos. AD 3) [38 n. 44](#)

Aemilia (hypothetical) sister of Paullus (cos. 50) [118](#), [181](#)

Aemilia (hypothetical) daughter of the cos. suff. [34](#) [32](#)

Aemilius Lepidus, M. (cos. 187, 175) [24](#), [28](#), [34](#)

Aemilius Lepidus, M. (cos. 46, 42; triumvir) [26](#), [30](#), [50](#), [51](#), [68](#), chap. 5 passim for his role in the maneuvers and crisis of [43](#) (108, 111–14 for triumph, 2nd consulship, role in proscriptions)

Aemilius Lepidus, Paullus (cos. suff. 34) [24](#), [28–30](#), [110–14](#), [124](#), [138](#), [160](#), [171–73](#)

Aemilius Paullus, L. (cos. 50) [30](#), [113–14](#)

Aemilius Scaurus, M. (cos. 115) [190](#)

Agrippa, M. Vipsanius (cos. 37, 26) [71](#), [111](#), [115–17](#), [120–22](#), [138](#), [151](#), [154–57](#), [160](#), [164](#), [166](#), [172](#), [175](#), [176](#), [180 n. 80](#)

Agrippina the Elder (or Major, wife of Germanicus) [10](#), [182](#), [184](#)

Ajax [125](#), [137](#), [140–42](#), [149](#)

Antistius, T. [32–34](#), [48](#)

Antonia the Elder (or Major) [173](#)

Antonius, C. (brother of the triumvir) [91](#), [109](#)

Antonius, L. (brother of the triumvir) [99](#)

Antonius, M. (cos. 44; triumvir; often appears as Antony) [18](#), [32](#), [45–46](#), [48](#), [51](#), [55–58](#), [61](#), [82](#), [64](#), [115–16](#) (in Perusine War), [117–26](#) (ruler of East, court of Cleopatra), [124–26](#), [131–33](#) (Plancus abandons), [138–42](#) (in Ode 1.7), [142–46](#) (eastern policies)

Apollo [10](#), [24](#), [135–42](#), [146](#) and [149–50](#) (in Ode 1.7)

Asinius Pollio, C. (cos. 40) [1](#), [5](#), [26](#), [100–02](#), [117](#), [138](#), [152](#), [156](#)

Ateius Capito, C. [32](#), [72](#)

Atticus, T. Pomponius [67–68](#), [72–74](#)

Augustus (see Octavian for entries prior to 27) [2–3](#), [5](#), [7–9](#), [16–17](#), [70–72](#), [102–05](#), [150–54](#), [155](#), [157–65](#) (grant of honorific 'Augustus'), [166–71](#) (in 24–23 and Ode 3.14), [171–73](#) (Plancus'

censorship), 173–75 (and eastern crisis of 21–20)
Aurelius (*praepositus* 44) 67, 81 n. 9

Caelius Rufus, M.

Caesar, C. Julius (cos. 59, 48, 47, 45, 44; Dictator) 2–3, 5, 27–28, 30, 32–34, chapter 3 passim, (emphasizing Plancus' service under from 54 to 44); 40–43 (selects Plancus as legate); 44–52 (civil war of 49–45); 49 (Cicero's appeals to in the *pro Marcello*); 50–51 (creates collegiate office of City Prefects); 52–57 (status in 45–44 and assassination)

Caieta (nurse of Aeneas) For the place, see the entries in the Index of Topics. 8–10, 18–19

Calpurnia (wife of Caesar) 50, 111

Calpurnius Piso, Cn. (cos. 23) 166

Calpurnius Piso, Cn. (cos. 7) 16, 24, 31, 182, 184

Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, L. (cos. 58) 66, 79, 87

Calpurnius Piso "Pontifex", L. (cos. 15) 11–12

Calvisius Sabinus (cos. suff. 39) 57, 138

Canidius Crassus P. (cos. suff. 40) 124, 129 n. 45, 132, 149 n. 34

Caninius Rebilus, C. (cos. suff. 45) 44

Cicero, M. Tullius (cos. 63) i, 1, 25–28, 34, 36, 73, 76–77 (friendship with Plancus); 31–34 (seeks Plancus' help in 46); 45–57 (civil war of 49–45); 49–50 (oration *pro Marcello*); 72, 85–108 (urges Plancus to fight Antony in 44–43)

Clark, Gen. Mark 187

Claudius Marcellus, C. (cos. 50) 45

Claudius Marcellus, M. (cos. 51) See also Oration "pro Marcello") 51

Claudius Nero, Ti. (pr. 42) 56. 66. 78

Claudius Pulcher, Ap. (cos. 54) 41

Claudius Pulcher (cos. 38) 138

Cleopatra 9–11, 17 n. 8, 18 n. 29, 112–13, 121–24 (extravagant dinner parties), 125–26 and 132–41 (Plancus abandons)

Cocceius Nerva, M. (cos. 36) 119, 124

Coponius family of Tibur 38 n. 45, Fig. 5.1 (villa)

Coponius, C. (pr. 49, enemy of Plancus) 127 n. 14, 133

Coponius, T. 31

Coriolanus 3

Cornelius Balbus, L. (cos. 40) 41

Cornelius Balbus, L. (nephew of preceding) 156

Cornelius Dolabella, P. (cos. 44) 51

Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, P. (cos. 147, 134) See *Scipio Aemilianus*

Decidius Saxa, L. 124

Dellius, Q. 17 n. 8. 129 n. 48, 132, 138, 147 n. 10

Domitius Ahenobarbus, Cn. (cos. 32) 110, 118, 124, 132

Domitius Ahenobarbus, L. (cos. 54) 41

Domitius Ahenobarbus, L. (cos. 16, enemy of Plancus) 173

Domitius Calvinus, Cn. (cos. 53) 178 n. 41

Ennius 159–63

Fabius, C. (legate under Caesar) 43–44, 46–47

Fabius Maximus, Q. (cos. suff. 45) 51, 53–54

Favorinus [69](#)
 Fonteius Capito, C. (cos. suff. 33) [124](#)
 Fufia, daughter of Fufius Calenus [86](#), [106 n. 3](#)
 Fufius Calenus, Q. (cos. 47) [52](#), [86](#), [88–91](#)
 Fulvia [115–17](#), [125](#)
 Furnius, C. (pr. 42, legate of Plancus) [5](#), [27](#), [75](#), [83 n. 43](#), [89](#), [92](#), [99](#), [103](#), [120–21](#), [124](#), [132](#), [138](#), [147 n. 6](#)

 Gellius Publicola, L. (cos. 36) [24](#) Fig. 2.3, [124](#)
 Germanicus Caesar [10](#), [16](#), [182–84](#)
 Glaucus [10](#), [123–24](#), [129](#) notes [48–49](#)
 Gratidius family of Arpinum [191–92](#)

 Henry I, king of England 1100–35 [128 n. 32](#), [158](#)
 Hercules: See Horace, Ode 3.14 and Temple of Hercules
 Herod, king of Judaea (37–4) [121–22](#), [145](#)
 Hirtius, A. (cos. 43) [2](#), [40](#), [48–50](#), [56](#), [61 n. 60](#), [65–68](#), [75–94](#) (consulship and death, 43)
 Horatius Flaccus, Q. (Horace) 5. 9–10, [20](#), [30](#), [44](#), [72](#) Ode 1.7 [134–42](#) Ode 3.14 [167–72](#) Epistula 1.3 [173–75](#)

 Julius Caesar, L. (cos. 64) [88](#)
 Julius Florus [173](#), [175](#)
 Junius Brutus, M. (pr. 44) [26](#), [51–52](#)
 Junius Brutus Albinus, Dec. (pr. 45?) [2](#), [51–52](#), [30](#), [43](#) [65](#), [77](#), [78–94](#) (besieged in Mutina), [95–101](#) and [108 n. 7](#) (joins Plancus), [109 n. 72](#) (death)

 Kesselring, Gen. Albert

 Labienus, Q. [116–19](#), [127 n. 23–24](#)
 Labienus, T. [40](#), [43–45](#), [58 n. 6–7](#)
 Laelius C. (cos. 145) [73](#), [163–64](#)
 Laterensis (legate 43) [99](#)
 Licinius Crassus, L. (cos. 95)
 Licinius Crassus, M. (cos. 30) [124](#), [138](#)
 Licinius Varro Murena, L. [167](#)
 Livia wife of Augustus [167](#), [81 n. 29](#), [124–25](#), [182–84](#)
 Lollius, M. (cos. 21) [138](#), [174](#)

 Maevia Galla [12](#)
 Mamurra [40](#)
 Marcius Censorinus L. [57](#)
 Marcius Philippus L. (cos. 56) [17 n. 1](#), [79](#), [87](#), [178 n. 41](#)
 Marcius Philippus, L. (cos. suff. 38) [156](#)
 Marius C. (cos. 107, 104–100, 86) [159–60](#)
 Matius, C. [49](#), [53](#), [56–57](#), [67](#), [76–77](#), [152](#)
 Munatia. sister of Plancus and mother of M. Titius [23](#), [24](#) Fig. 2.3
 Munatia Plancina, granddaughter of Plancus and wife of Cn. Piso [24](#) Fig. 2.3, [40](#), [129 n. 50](#), [179 n. 67](#), [182–84](#)
 Munatius, C. (senator 173) [24](#) Fig. 2.3, [28–29](#)

(Munatius) Plancus, C., defended by L. Crassus [190–92](#)

Munatius Plancus, C., Plancus' brother adopted as L. Plautius Plancus See [Plautius Plancus, L.](#)

Munatius Plancus, L. (C.f.), honored at Delos [21](#), [23](#), [24](#) Fig. 2.3

Munatius Plancus, L. (L.f.), legate 87 and father of cos. 42 [8](#), [23–25](#)

Munatius Plancus, L. (cos. 42) See also the Index of Topics. [1–5](#) (reputation), [6–8](#) (mausoleum and epitaph), [25–28](#) (friendship with Cicero), [39–50](#) (legate under Caesar, 54–46), [50–54](#) (prefect of the city in 45), [51–53](#) (designated consul for 42), chap. 4 passim (proconsul of Gallia Comata in 44–43), [69–72](#) (founds colony at Raurica), [95–105](#) (against Antony, spring 43), [102–05](#) (founds colony at Lugdunum), Chap. 6 passim (service under Antony, summer 43–mid-32), [111–15](#) (consul 42), [115–16](#) (Perusine War), [116–19](#) (proconsul of Asia in 39), [120–21](#) (governor of Syria in 35), [122–26](#) (at court of Cleopatra and Antony in 35–32), [134–42](#) (dedictee of Ode 1.7, (changes allegiance to Octavian in 32), [155–57](#) (Temple of Saturn), [157–65](#) (proposes 'Augustus' in 27), [171–73](#) (censor in 22), [167–71](#) (in Ode 3.14), [173–75](#) (in Armenia in 20), [187–89](#) (villa at Tibur)

Munatius Plancus, L., son of preceding [24](#) Fig. 2.3, [182](#)

Munatius Plancus Bursa, T. [22](#), [193](#)

Munatius Plancus (Paullinus?), L. (cos. AD 13) [24](#) Fig. 2.3, [182–83](#), [188 n. 6](#)

Munatius Rufus [35 n. 8](#)

Octavian (C. Julius Caesar Octavianus) (cos. 43; triumvir 43–33) See entries under Augustus for events from 27 onward. [69](#), [72–80](#), [87–106](#) (in civil war of 43), Chap. 6 passim for his years as triumvir, [131–42](#) (Plancus joins Octavian), [141–42](#) (as Apollo), [142–46](#) (in the East, 32–29)

Oppius, C. [59–50](#), [152](#)

Plancius, Cn. [190](#)

Plautius Silvanus family from Trebula Suffenas [30–31](#), [38 n. 44](#)

Plautius, A. (pr. 51) [33–34](#)

Plautius Plancus, L. (pr. 43, Plancus' brother) [22](#), [47](#), [72](#), [74](#), [89](#), [9](#), [105–06](#) (proscribed and killed late 43/early 42), [109](#) notes [78–79](#), [112](#)

Pliny the Elder [10–11](#)

Pompeius, Sextus (son of preceding) [3](#), [92](#), [120](#), [146](#)

Pontius Aquila [102](#), [194](#)

Porphyry [20](#), [136](#)

Rich, Sir Richard [3–4](#)

Roger of Salisbury [128 n. 32](#)

Sallustius Crispus, C. (advisor to Augustus) [138](#)

Scipio Aemilianus (cos. 147, 134) [73](#), [81–86](#), [163–64](#), [191](#)

Sempronia Atratina [37 n. 38](#), [127 n. 16](#)

Sempronius Atratinus, L. (cos. suff. 34) [18 n. 11](#) (mausoleum at Caieta), [24](#) Fig. 2.3, [114](#), [124](#)

Seneca (Elder and Younger) [1](#), [10](#), [162](#)

Servilius Isauricus, P. (cos. 48) [51](#), [90–91](#)

Sestius Quirinalis, L. (cos. suff. 23) (dedictee of Horace, Ode 1.4) [138](#), [167](#)

Sextius, T. [44](#), [62 n. 70](#), [109 n. 71](#)

Silius Nerva, P. (cos. 20) [138](#)

Sosius, C. (cos. 32) [119](#), [124](#), [130 n. 57](#) (Temple of Apollo Sosianus)

Stalitia, daughter of Statilius Taurus [166](#), [179 n. 67](#)

Statilius Taurus, T. (cos. suff. 37, ord. 26)

Sulpicius Quirinius, P. (cos. 12) [174](#)

Sulpicius Rufus, Ser. (cos. 51) [79](#), [87–88](#), [106](#) notes [9](#) and [16](#)

Talleyrand [4](#)

Terentius Varro Murena, A. (cos. des. 23) [166–67](#)

Teucer [134–42](#), [146](#), [165](#), [172](#)

Tiberius (emperor 14–37) [10](#), [16](#), [166](#), [173–75](#) (mission to Armenia in 20), [182–84](#) (friendship with Cn. Piso)

Tigranes of Armenia [174](#)

Titius, L. (husband of Munatia and father of the following) [23](#), [24](#) Fig. 2.3, [121](#)

Titius, M. (cos. suff. 31, nephew of Plancus) [24](#) Fig. 2.3, [120–21](#) (executes Sex. Pompey in 35), [131–34](#), [138](#) (abandons Antony in 32, rewarded by Octavian), [173–75](#) (with Plancus in Armenia, 20)

Trebatius Testa, C. [41–42](#), [48](#), [119](#), [138](#)

Trebonius, C. (cos. suff. 43) [43](#), [51–56](#), [89](#)

Tullius Cicero, M. (cos. suff. 30, son of the orator) [138](#)

Tullius Cicero, Q. (pr. 62, brother of the orator) [41–43](#), [58](#), [84](#) n. 62

“Turia” [112](#)

Valerius Messalla Corvinus, M. (cos. 31) [110–111](#), [124](#) [138](#), [147](#) n. 14

Valerius Messalla Rufus, M. (cos. 53) [178](#) n. 41

Varius Cotyla, L. [104](#)

Vatinius, P. (cos. 47) [42](#), [48](#), [52](#), [89](#)

Velleius Paterculus, C. [1](#), [9](#), [16](#), [183](#)

Ventidius Bassus, P. (cos. suff. 43) [115–16](#) (in Perusine War), [117–18](#) (vs. Q. Labienus 40–39)

Venus See also [Temple of Venus Genetrix](#) [54–55](#), [118](#)

Vergilius Maro, P. (“Vergil”) See also *Aeneid* [5](#), [8–9](#), [140–42](#), [156](#), [161](#), [171](#)

Vibius Pansa, C. (cos. 43, prominent subordinate of Caesar) [2](#), [48–49](#), [6](#), [79](#), [86–94](#) (consulship and death)

Vipsanius Agrippa, M. See [Agrippa](#)

Vitellius, L. (cos. AD 34) [10](#), [162](#)

Index of Topics

Acta Caesaris 75, 85

Actium 10, 31, 36, 110, 111, 124, 129, 130, 132, 133, 134, 139, 142, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 155, 156, 172, 173, 174, 196, 199, 201

Aemilia voting tribe 20, 23, 29, 32, 34, 35, 39, 110

Aerarium see [Temple of Saturn](#)

Aeneid 8–9, 142, 149, 161, 171, 195, 197, 199–200, 202, 205–206

Africa, campaign of 46: 44, 47–9, 50, 60, 72, 78

African War of Caesar see [Bellum Africum](#)

Amnesty on March 17 of 44: 56, 66–8, 80, 93, 113, 121

Aniensis voting tribe 33, 38

Aquae Statiellae 101

Arar river (modern Saone) 95

Argenteus river (modern Argens) 99–100, 108

Armenia (mission to in 20) 173–4

Asia (Plancus as governor in 40–39) 117–19, 122, 128, 148

Asia (Sextus Pompey's final campaign in 35) 146, 147

Augst (near Basel) see [Raurica](#)

Bellum Africum improbably attributed to Plancus 47–8, 60, 199

Bellum Civile of Caesar 46

Bellum Gallicum (Caesar's *Commentarii*) 44

Beneventum (modern Benevento) 6, 23, 24, 35, 111–15, 155

Brundisium (modern Brindisi) 32, 48, 75, 116, 121, 131, 165, 173

Buthrotum (modern Butrint) 72, 74

Caieta (modern Gaeta) 5–6, 8–9, 18, 20–1, 23–4, 27, 29–30, 34, 37, 43, 47, 51, 66, 76, 80, 102, 105, 122, 152, 154, 184–7, 190–91. See also [Mausoleum of Plancus at Caieta](#).

Camilia voting tribe 20, 29, 35

Carmen, *carmina* see [Ode by Horace](#).

Censorship (of Plancus in 22) i, 8, 16, 28, 37, 139, 152, 154, 171–73, 176, 177, 181

City Prefects see [Prefects of the City](#)

Civil War of Caesar see [Bellum Civile](#)

Civil War (of 49–45) 2, 6, 25, 40, 43, 44–5, 55–7, 64–5, 69, 75–7

Civil War (of 32–30) 131–34, 193–94, 199, 203

Consulship of Plancus (in 42) 2, 5, 7, 11, 16, 21, 29, 35, 40, 44, 51, 111–13

Copia Munatia Felix (original name of Colonia Lugdunum) 102–4, 109

Cularo (modern Grenoble) 101, 108, 194

De Amicitia (of Cicero) 73, 82, 148, 200

Delos 20–1, 23, 24, 30, 37, 60, 71, 109, 190–1

De Re Publica (of Cicero) 50, 153, 161–4, 179; *see also* *Somnium Scipionis*
Dictator, Dictatorship 1–2, 46, 48–51, 53–4, 57, 60, 66, 103, 146, 157, 167, 198
Dissimulatio 79, 84, 199
Donations of Alexandria (in 34) 125–6
Druids 17, 44, 59

Epistula (of Horace) 175

Epulo, epulones (priesthood held by Plancus) 6, 51, 128, 156

Equestris colonia *see* *Noviodunum*

Farther Gaul *see* *Gallia Comata*

Formiae (modern Formia) 20, 23–5, 27, 29–31, 34, 37, 46–7, 57, 72, 105, 114, 186, 190, 192

Forum Julii (modern Frejus) 99, 108

Forum Gallorum (battle in 43) 102

Friendship between Plancus and Cicero 20, 23, 25–6, 32, 36, 43, 49, 73, 74–6, 78, 82, 88, 152, 191;
see also *necessitudo*

Gaeta *see* *Caieta*

Gallia Comata (or Transalpina or Farther Gaul; Plancus as proconsular governor in 44–43) 3,
16, 26, 40–1, 43, 53, 64, 66–81, 86–7, 90–1

Gallia Narbonensis (or Narbonese Gaul) 68, 203

Gallic War Commentaries *see* *Bellum Gallicum*

Grenoble *see* *Cularo*

Gustav Line (German fortifications in 1943–44) 187

Hadrumetum (modern Sousse) 47

Ides of March 56–7, 64, 133, 195, 199

Imperator (Plancus as in 44–43 and possibly 39) 11, 76–7, 83, 119, 128, 176

Isara river (modern Isere) 95, 101

Kingship, Caesar's possible plans for 53–6, 62, 146, 163

Legatus (legate; Plancus as under Caesar from 54) 3, 23–4, 35, 40–5, 47–8, 51, 60, 118, 128

Legion V Alaudae 47–8, 60, 67

Lugdunum colonia (modern Lyon; founded by Plancus in 43) 4, 6, 13, 16, 70–1, 83, 95, 102, 104–
5, 109, 114, 166, 197

Mausoleum of Augustus at Rome 154

Mausoleum of Plancus at Caieta 6–9, 43, 114, 122, 152, 185–7

Mausoleum of Plautii at Ponte Lucano 8, 30

Mausoleum of Sempronius Atratinus at Caieta 114

Menenia voting tribe 31, 38

Monte Orlando *see* *Caieta*

Minturnae (modern Minturno) 31, 37, 192

Mutina (modern Modena, Decimus Brutus besieged at in 44–3) 28, 33, 78, 85, 88–90, 93–4, 97,
102, 115 Mylasa (Plancus honored with priesthood at) viii, 118–19, 128

Narbonese Gaul *see* *Gallia Narbonensis*

Necessitudo between Plancus and Cicero 26–8, 32–34, 36, 73–5, 76–77, 83, 94, 191, 193
Noviodunum colonia Equestris (modern Nyon) 70–1

Ode by Horace *see* *Horatius Flaccus, Q.* in *Index of People*
 Operation Diadem (spring of 1944) [187](#)
 Orations of Cicero *see* *Cicero, Tullius M.* in *Index of People*
 Pannonia [183–4](#)
 Perusia (modern Perugia, siege of in 41–40) [115–16](#)
 Philippi (battle of in 42) [110–15](#), [117](#), [126](#), [134](#), [138](#)
 Prefect of the City (collegiate office founded by Caesar in 45) [40](#), [50–2](#), [53](#), [54–5](#), [61–2](#)
Principes, principate [8](#), [11](#), [16](#), [28](#), [65](#), [146](#), [152](#), [153–4](#), [156](#), [159](#), [161](#), [164](#), [167](#), [169](#), [172](#), [176–9](#), [184](#),
[197](#), [199](#), [201–3](#), [205](#)

Questor (Plancus as) [24](#), [28–9](#), [34–5](#), [40–1](#), [52–3](#), [57](#)

Raetian campaign (Plancus in) [69](#), [76](#), [78](#), [112](#), [139](#), [153](#), [164](#)
 Raurica (modern Augst, founded by Plancus in 44) [6](#), [16](#), [69–71](#), [76](#), [95](#), [102](#), [109](#), [196](#)
 Rhone river (ancient Rhodanus) [16](#), [65](#), [67](#), [69–70](#), [77](#), [95](#), [99](#), [103](#), [105](#), [107](#)
 Salernum (modern Salerno, death of Plancus' brother in 43) [105–06](#)
 Saone river *see* *Arar river*
Sententia (motion of Plancus conferring “Augustus” on Octavian in 27) [152–65](#), [177](#)
Servire temporibus (attributed to Plancus) [1](#), [46](#), [76–80](#), [97–100](#), [106](#), [111](#)
 “Settlement of 27” [155–57](#), [157–65](#), [177](#), [200](#)
Somnium Scipionis (“Dream of Scipio”) [86](#), [163–65](#)
 Syria (Plancus as governor of in 35–(?)) [119–22](#), [128](#), [145](#)
 Tarracina (modern Terracina) [29–30](#), [32](#), [37](#)
 Temple of Apollo on Palatine [155–7](#)
 Temple of Divus (or Deified) Julius [155–6](#)
 Temple of Hercules Victor (or Invictus) at Tibur [13](#), [20](#), [30](#), [136](#), [170](#)
 Temple of Janus [155–7](#)
 Temple of Saturn [156–7](#)
 Temple of Venus Genetrix [54–5](#), [62](#)
 Tibur (modern Tivoli; often said to be Plancus' home) [5](#), [13](#), [16](#), [20–2](#), [25](#), [27](#), [30–4](#), [35–9](#)
 Tivoli *see* *Tibur*
 Tivoli region villas *see* *Tibur*
 Transalpine Gaul *see* *Gallia Comata*
 Trebula Suffenas (home town of the Plautii Silvani) [31](#), [33](#), [204](#)
 Triumph (of Plancus at end of 43) [6](#), [12](#), [43](#), [64](#), [69](#), [76](#), [102–5](#), [108](#), [111](#), [119](#), [153](#), [175–7](#)
Tumultus (vs. Antony in 44–43) [87–9](#)

Unguentarius (dealer in oils and perfumes) [109](#)

Vada Sabatia (Savona) [97](#)
 Villas near Tibur *see* *Tibur*

Wife of Plancus (name unknown) [12](#), [24](#), [27](#), [36](#), [40](#), [183](#)
 Will of Antony (contents revealed by Plancus in 32) [120](#), [133](#), [147](#), [177](#), [197](#)



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